



Property of

CBPL

Please return to

Graduate Theological
Union Library

THE CHURCH YEAR PULPIT LIBRARY

THE CHURCH YEAR PULPIT LIBRARY

In Twelve Volumes

I

ADVENT SUNDAYS

II

ADVENT COURSES—CHRISTMASTIDE

III

EPIPHANY AND FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD
SUNDAYS AFTER

IV

EPIPHANY: FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH SUNDAYS
AFTER—SEPTUAGESIMA

V

SEXAGESIMA—SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

VI

LENT: THIRD, FOURTH, AND FIFTH SUNDAYS—
PASSIONTIDE

VII

EASTER DAY AND FIRST SUNDAY AFTER

VIII

EASTER: SECOND SUNDAY AFTER—ASCENSION DAY

IX

WHITSUNDAY—TRINITY: FIRST AND SECOND
SUNDAYS AFTER

X

TRINITY: THIRD TO NINTH SUNDAYS AFTER

XI

TRINITY: TENTH TO THIRTEENTH SUNDAYS AFTER

XII

TRINITY: FOURTEENTH TO TWENTY-FIFTH
SUNDAYS AFTER—HOLY DAYS

THE CHURCH YEAR PULPIT LIBRARY

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

F. M. BARTON COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

CLEVELAND AND NEW YORK

Property of

CBPL

Please return to

Graduate Theological

Union Library

BV
4223
C52
19002
V.10

~~BV4223~~
~~B28~~
~~V.10~~

PACIFIC LUTHERAN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
THE LIBRARY

15875

Contents

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY—

	PAGE
1. Complete Sermon,	2
2. Outlines on the Epistle,	9
3. Outlines on the Gospel,	12
4. Outlines on the Lessons,	17
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture,	23
6. Illustrations,	37

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY—

1. Complete Sermon,	39
2. Outlines on the Epistle,	47
3. Outline on the Gospel,	58
4. Outlines on the Lessons,	59
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture,	63
6. Illustrations,	72

CONTENTS

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY—

	PAGE
1. Complete Sermon,	74
2. Outline on the Epistle,	81
3. Outlines on the Gospel,	86
4. Outlines on the Lessons,	97
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture,	108
6. Illustrations,	118

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY—

1. Complete Sermon,	120
2. Outline on the Epistle,	128
3. Outline on the Gospel,	130
4. Outline on the Lessons,	132
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture,	134
6. Illustrations,	148

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY—

1. Complete Sermon,	150
2. Outline on the Epistle,	159
3. Outlines on the Gospel,	164
4. Outline on the Lessons,	167
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture,	171
6. Illustrations,	173

CONTENTS

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY—

	PAGE
1. Complete Sermon,	174
2. Outlines on the Epistle,	184
3. Outlines on the Gospel,	194
4. Outline on the Lessons,	201
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture,	203
6. Illustrations,	208

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY—

1. Complete Sermon,	210
2. Outlines on the Epistle,	217
3. Outlines on the Gospel,	222
4. Outline on the Lessons,	260
5. Outlines for the Day on Various Passages of Scripture,	268
6. Illustrations,	278

**SERMONS, OUTLINES AND ILLUSTRATIONS
FOR SUNDAYS AND HOLY DAYS**

Third Sunday after Trinity

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	1 S. PETER V. 5-11.
GOSPEL	S. LUKE XV. 1-10.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	1 SAMUEL II. TO V. 27.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	1 SAMUEL III. OR 1 SAMUEL IV. TO V. 19.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Jesus' Estimate of Human Value.

How much is a man better than a sheep? S. MATTHEW xii. 12.



ONE Sabbath-day a man with a withered hand came to our Lord and asked to be healed. The Pharisaic precisians, who were standing by, interposed an objection. They said the man ought to wait till the next day. To cure him there and then would be a violation of the regulations concerning the Sabbath-day. It is not necessary to suppose that their objection was either captious or dishonest. It would not lay any special hardship upon the man to wait, and it was of importance that the sanctity of the Sabbath should be maintained. It was an institution whose practical use had been vindicated by centuries of experience. But it was an institution which could only be sustained by ceaseless vigilance. There was always somebody ready to encroach upon it in the interest of his own personal advantage. But if exception was allowed in one case, not clearly of overwhelming necessity, then another would ask the same favour, and another, and another, and the Sabbath rest, which was such a social and national blessing, would be lost. For this reason surgery,

COMPLETE SERMON

and most of medicine, were unlawful on that day. It is not very easy for us to realise that to their way of thinking the cure which it was proposed that Jesus should perform had in it no element of religion. It was quite a matter of course that a great *Hakim* should perform such a cure, but then the *Hakim* was no more exempt from Sabbath-day restrictions than was another man. And Jesus did not question the soundness of their premises, but He showed them in three sentences that their conclusion was wrong.

‘What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?’

That would be a breach of regulations also; but then it was clearly justifiable by an appeal to that conviction which has always been powerful in the Jew, the sacredness of property. They would unhesitatingly rescue a sheep on the Sabbath, not because the sheep was suffering, but because it was worth money. They would not have understood Him if He had appealed to their pity, either for a sheep or a man, but He appealed to their commercial instinct: ‘How much is a man better than a sheep?’ If the law of the Sabbath can be set aside to save a sheep because it is too valuable to be lost, what may not be done in the interest of a man by one who is alive to his intrinsic value? In this case His argument was trifling because He was dealing with trifling people, and may it not have had something of pleasantry in it? But it is of a piece with His whole way of thinking of humanity.

According to Him, this is God’s way of feeling about men. They are too valuable to be lost. He came ‘to seek and to save’ them, because to His judgment they were intrinsically worth saving. The price which He paid shows how He, at any rate, estimated them. There is a homely old proverb to the effect that ‘the worst use you can put a man to is to hang him.’ It sometimes must be done, but it is a waste which is incurred reluctantly. To damn him would be a still worse use. This also may be necessary; but we may be sure that it will be done still more reluctantly.

Now, I wish you seriously to consider the question, whether this exalted estimate of the value of humanity which Jesus entertained is a correct one. That He really did hold it I shall try to show after a little, but at present I only ask you to consider the valuation itself.

Whether it be correct or not, it is contrary to the opinion unhesitatingly expressed by very many whom men have accounted wise. Mr. Carlyle once took occasion to speak of the population of England as ‘thirty millions, mostly fools.’ There is no reason to doubt that this contemptuous estimate expressed his real thought. Horace had

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

said the same thing centuries before him, and Cæsar had indorsed it. The Pharisees held the same view, and the philosophers agreed with them to a man. But, what is most significant to us, the religious world has, in large measure, taken the same view. Even David, who discerned that man was set in a place not far below the angels, failed to comprehend the real force of the fact, and asked in impatience, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?' 'Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away.' This estimate of the poet king, and that of his splendid son, passed into the thought of the Jews, and probably remains there until this day. Jesus was utterly free from it, though there are traces of their hereditary notions upon this subject in the words of some of the New Testament writers. But in the Western Christendom in which we live, the great Augustine's mean and false estimate of man holds almost universal sway. He was the great theological system-builder of the Western Church. His theology has been dominant for more than fourteen hundred years. He had been reared a Pagan. He was a philosopher, a scholar, a man of affairs, and lived in debauchery until nearly middle life. When he became a Christian he pursued his new profession with the same fierce eagerness that had marked his old studies and his old dissipations. But he brought with him into Christianity the same low estimate of man's worth which marked the shallow, cruel, despairing Paganism of decadent Rome. This dark view of human character was intensified by the unflinching examination which he had made of himself. When he looked within he saw a personality beneath contempt. He mistakenly assumed that that represented the average man. But his genius and his sanctity availed to carry his doctrine of 'total depravity' throughout the Western Church, and bound it upon the minds of men for centuries to come. In the Middle Ages he was the master, and the Roman Church still accepts his theology. Luther, an Augustinian monk, brought it into the theology of the Germanic Reformation. Calvin, in his *Institutes*, expounded the same theology, and fastened it upon the French, and Scotch, and American world. There are traces of it in our Prayer Book, and our Articles adopted it, without question, as a part of the common thought of the time when they were formulated. It is now the thought about man which is popularly accepted as 'orthodox.' It speaks of man in terms of contempt. It fancies that by exaggerating his degradation and unworthiness it so far exalts the goodness, and mercy, and compassion of God. The more contemptible the thing saved can be made out to be, the more glorious will be the Saviour and the salvation.

It has come about also in our time that physical science has joined

COMPLETE SERMON

forces with orthodox theology to vilify human nature. If David thought meanly of man, whom he saw to be, on his spiritual side, 'little lower than the angels,' what must a generation think which has found him to be, on his physical side, little higher than the ape? We have all come to believe that this is substantially true. We have traced the history of the race away beyond that portion of its course with which Scripture is concerned. We trace the path back to Eden, cross the Garden, and pass out at the other side, following the trail to the primeval caves in which prehuman brutes snarled, and gnawed their bones. We have watched through the ages the heavings of the sea of humanity. We have seen individuals, now and again, thrown high up on the shore of some new achievement in morals or knowledge, and have seen their descendants hold the vantage gained. But the temper of our science is to think meanly of the great, uncounted, unthinking, unfeeling mass. It expects and hopes of them little more than that they shall be the soil out of which better things shall grow 'with the passing of the suns.' The last word of physical science, and the last word of Calvinistic theology, concerning man, is the same: he is 'vile earth'!

I. Now, set over-against this Jesus' estimate of human nature. As a starting-point, consider the title by which He commonly described Himself, the 'Son of man.' He seemed always solicitous that there should be no mistake about what He was. He was a man. Whatever humanity might be, that, He wanted it understood, He was. He asked no exemptions. He identified Himself with men absolutely. He was not God masquerading. He was a man, and therefore a son of God. All His thought of His work for men is coloured by this belief in the intrinsic value of man. In that great trilogy of parables from which Christianity shines out, this is conspicuous—the lost coin, the lost sheep, the lost man. A woman loses a coin. It rolls away into obscurity and darkness; it becomes overlaid with dust and rubbish; it is lost to circulation and to its owner's use: but the divine mistress never conceives of it as being anything but precious metal, wherever it may be. Being lost, it is not transmuted to sordid iron or worthless clay. She searches diligently until she finds it, because she does believe it to be always valuable. When she finds it, dimmed with dust and covered with rust, it needs only to be cleansed, not recast. The image and superscription of the great King is upon it, and always has been.

A man loses a silly sheep, who strays from the flock into the desert. It runs hither and thither, and loses all sense of direction. It keeps itself alive on brackish water and desert scrub; it is torn by brambles, and hunted by wolves; but it remains a sheep. It is not transformed into a goat, much less into a jackal. The divine shepherd seeks it,

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

because he knows it is of value. His motive is double: he pities its pain, and he cannot afford to lose it or its fleece. He leaves the ninety and nine, and traverses the desert till he finds it, and brings it home rejoicing.

A man loses his son. The lad, from wantonness and a boy's unbridled thought of liberty, wanders into a far country. He squanders his life among harlots and swine. But no Circe transforms him into a pig. His divine father's blood is in his veins all the while, and his father's love follows him through all his wanderings. Wanting him, the father's content cannot be complete. When he 'comes to himself,' not when he is transformed into something else, he turns his face toward his father's house.

Could Augustine or Calvin have written these parables? No: they spring from Jesus' profound estimate of the value of man.

II. His practice was like His theory. He associated habitually with the 'common people.' This phrase is persistently misapprehended. A sharp distinction is drawn in our minds between the rich, cultivated, educated class on the one hand, and the poor, squalid, and vicious class on the other; and we think of these last as being the common people. This misses the meaning. Common people are average people. Those contemporaries of Jesus who were for any reason withdrawn from the common mass of humanity were withdrawn from Him. There are always such people. The possessor of exceptional wealth will isolate a man. A certain kind of advanced education will do it. A feeling of religious exclusiveness will do it. So also will exceptional immorality, or confirmed, deliberate wrongdoing. Jesus associated with none of these. He could not do so without separating Himself from the mass of average humanity—the 'common people.' Neither riches nor poverty shut Him out, so long as their possessors remained in touch with their kind. It was only when Dives shut his gate, and sat down, flower-garlanded, to a banquet with a few boon companions, that Jesus could not enter. But He dined again and again at rich men's houses, He had the *entrée* of a rich man's garden, and a rich girl who could afford to break a costly chatelaine of alabaster above His head, was His chosen friend. Only those who withdrew themselves from their kind, shut themselves off from Him. He was concerned with men, and wherever humanity was left He was interested. He fraternised with the poor, for in them He saw humanity stripped to its lowest terms. He ate and drank with sinners, for in them He found humanity stripped still more bare, unclothed with either goods or character. The common people heard Him gladly, because they recognised Him as one of themselves.

'The man most man works best for man
Like God at Nazareth.'

COMPLETE SERMON

I am quite alive to the objection which some urge to this whole way of thinking and speaking. They allege that it leaves out of sight, and, indeed, tends to obscure, the distinction between the 'saved' and the 'lost,' between the regenerate and the unregenerate, between the natural man and the spiritual man. They will allow what I have said, with some qualifications, to apply to the saints; but they assert that other men absolutely, and even the saints naturally, are 'as nothing, and worse than nothing, in the sight of God.'

This objection may, as it seems to me, be fairly answered in two ways. In the first place, it would be sufficient to say that what I have tried to set forth is clearly the teaching of Jesus; and then leave to them to harmonise it with other truth in whatever way they see fit.

But, besides that, it seems to me that the objection arises from a misconception of the facts of the situation, and a misapprehension of the Holy Scriptures. The distinction of natural and spiritual man is indeed present in the Scriptures. But it is a classification which does not run between men, but through them; that is to say, the same persons are at the same time both natural and spiritual. It is not the truth that some men are gods, and some are beasts; but it is true that every man is compounded of God and brute. Salvation is the process of eradicating the brute, and extending the dominion of the divine part over the whole nature.

III. The supreme work of Jesus has been, and is, to bring men into a hopeful temper. He does this by showing them what they are. This is what is needed practically. Men are deterred from entering upon the task of personal redemption from the bonds of sin by an antecedent despair. Their brute inheritance is so clamorous that they have forgotten that they are also gods. The great value of the Incarnation is the proof which it affords that God can in very deed dwell in human form. Wherever the great fact of the Incarnation has been received, man's consciousness of his own dignity has revived. His sense of kinship with God has asserted itself. The creature discovers that he was not made subject to vanity willingly, but by reason of Him who hath been under that subjection in hope. He begins, in this hope, to strive for deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God! In the presence of Jesus, men slowly discover that they are not worthless, and that they are not hopeless.

If my hope of salvation lay only in my contemptible craving for God's pity, I should despair in advance. But since I learn that God needs me as well as I Him, I rest serenely in the certainty that God will, unless I hinder Him, accomplish His own purpose.

Jesus appeals with confidence to that instinct of men which has

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

always responded whenever they have been induced to heed Him. He, and He alone, has found the long-closed door to men's innermost soul; and such have found Him to be the very door through which they pass to God.

‘He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers. Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.’

S. D. M'CONNELL.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

A Fourfold View of the Spiritual Life.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

I PETER V. 10.



THIS is a prayer of the venerable Apostle, coming in at the close of some weighty practical counsels. There is a specificness and individuality about these counsels which indicate the idea that they had been taken from life; and we are at no loss to conjecture who it was that had been sitting for the portrait. The Apostle was evidently one of those who had made large proficiency in that science of all sciences—a knowledge of himself; and if in the prosecution of this great study he had been led to discover that his own heart was vain, and foolish, and untrustworthy, and weak of purpose, and yet withal ever confident, ever forward, he had good reason to know that his heart was the type of a good many hearts besides. He might feel assured of preaching well to others, if he learned only how to preach well to himself. All persons might not with him have been precipitated from the heights of proud and self-sufficient confidence, but all would feel that they had need for the counsel to be ‘clothed with humility.’ All might not have experienced so bitterly what it was to smart for sin, to lie low and unmoved, and without a word, whilst blow after blow smote him, but to none could the advice come amiss, ‘Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.’ All might not have realised within himself Satan’s awful personality as a spirit, dire, potent, and unsleeping, shifting and shaking out the soul’s confidence as wheat shook into the sea, but no man who ever gave his salvation a thought could be indifferent to the caution—‘Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.’ Whilst, once more, if there were none who had shown so mournfully and so often a want of faith, and constancy, and moral stableness as the Apostle had done, yet surely he did all his converts kind service when he prayed for their increase in all these good gifts, saying, ‘the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.’

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

I. The text is a prayer, the prayer of an inspired Apostle, who, in desiring for his people the best things which the God of all grace can bestow, virtually prays that for a time they might be under the rod. He wishes they might be strengthened, stablished, settled, made perfect, ripe for glory, but not until after they have suffered a while. He plainly assumes that in the great chain, of which the calling of the Christian and the glory of the Christian are the two extremes, suffering is necessarily an intermediate link, and therefore that absolute freedom from outward trial is not even a permitted object of desire with him, still less of his prayer. An exception is made here, that we ought not to desire outward calamity for its own sake; this were to contravene the inevitable choices of universal humanity, 'for no chastisement for the present is joyous but grievous.' But as spiritual evils are incomparably greater than temporal, so temporal evils should be borne cheerfully, because they are to promote our spiritual improvement. And this may be made the ground for the trial of our own spirits, whether we are more sensible to outward calamities—calamities which affect life, and time, and things that pass away, or of those inward things which may destroy our hopes of life eternal.

II. Now, as I have said, the next aspect of the principle suggested by the text is the Christian perfected. Four words are used by the Apostle to express this, which, without having any strongly marked difference of signification, are yet not to be dismissed as if they expressed but one idea. The first word we render, 'make you perfect,' hardly conveys the idea of the original, and a little hinders the ascending order of the Apostle's climax; it is rather, the God of all grace, fit, prepare, adapt you for your Christian calling—give you readiness and aptitude for the spiritual service, make you a vessel meet for the Master's use; grant you that preparedness of heart and mind which will enable you to receive, as the clay receives from the hand of the potter, the impress of holiness, and retain the image of God. The next word, 'stablish,' plainly has respect to that unswerving moral constancy, if a right choice has been once made, in which the Apostle knew himself to have been so mournfully deficient. It is a prayer against the irresoluteness and feebleness of character which is more dangerous through its very amiableness, because it leads men from a desire to please, or a fear of offending, to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. 'May you,' says the Apostle, 'be delivered from this unsteady profession of the faith, leaving you the poor sport of every wind that blows, and making you fall into the scarcely covered snare. It is a good thing for the heart to be established with grace; you have chosen the good part; if you do not throw it away, it shall never be taken from you.'

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

His third stage of Christian perfection is 'strengthen,' which respects the general advancement of the Christian character—a growth in grace, an increase of moral power, a building up of all parts of the spiritual life, a progressing conformity to the likeness of the mind of Christ. The last part of the Apostle's benedictory prayer is that 'the God of all grace' would 'settle' his believing converts. It might at first appear to add nothing to the prayer already uttered, but on comparing it with like uses of the word, a higher allusion is found, fitly crowning the whole benediction. It is that they may be settled as a building is settled on some strong foundation, that their souls may stand fast on a rock, that they might be, in fact, as the Apostle had expressed it in the second chapter, 'as lively stones, built up as a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' 'A chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.' On this stone, this tried stone, the rock of ages, the Apostle prays, 'the God of all grace' to settle your souls.

III. Now, in the last place, consider the Christian glorified. We cannot fail to see in the words I have read a beautiful symmetry and harmony of parts. Our salvation is set forth as one continuous act of 'the God of all grace,' calling us by the Gospel of Christ along a path of suffering, through a course of progressive moral improvements, to His eternal glory. We are not to suppose that a believer goes through all his trials, giving up many earthly delights, disciplining himself in courage, patient faith, meek endurance, daily, all to have no recompense in the end. Some people sell their souls for the world, but their ill-starred fortunes do not get the world after all. The believer, without seeking the world, is sure to have as much of it as is good for him now, and hereafter a brighter world of his own. Thus the Christian life is a secret life—his motives, his aims, his hopes are to the men of this generation a great unknown. They think it strange his sympathies and delights are not like the sympathies and delights that they have—and why? They see but one side of the picture; they see what he endures, but they see not what he hopes for; they see what he leaves behind, they see not what God is calling him to before; they see him on the way bearing his cross, despising the shame, enduring the contradiction of sinners, without being faint or weary; but they see not the joy that is set before him at the right hand of God, a portion with Christ of eternal glory. Yes, eternal glory, for this is the sum of all in the great contest of human preference. Something might have been said for the worldly man if the good he was striving after was one which, when obtained, he could always keep; just as much would be taken from the Christian's crown, if his possession

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

were one that he could ever lose. But the idea of eternity, as applied to the good man's lot, crushes and overwhelms; comparisons vanish; in the arithmetic of the infinite we lose all reckoning; a moment measures the span of our earthly suffering, the lightest feather suffices to show its weight: 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

D. MOORE.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Christ Eating with Sinners.

This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. S. LUKE xv. 2.

- I. E will look first at the conduct of our Lord. It was quite true of Him when He was upon earth that He received and welcomed sinners. Wherever He went the doors stood open, even while He ate, for the entrance of all comers. There was no guard set to keep out improper characters. There was no previous question asked as to life and conduct. Whosoever would, came to Him unchallenged.

And strange to say many very sinful persons did will to come. You would have thought that there was that in Him which would have deterred them. So saintly a life, so pure a conversation; on the other hand, so mean a station, so hard and needy a condition; each and all of these particulars might have been expected to repel rather than to attract such visitors. Silver and gold had He none; and what He had was of a coinage too spiritual, too heavenly for these applicants. And yet, wherever He went, wherever He rested, He was surrounded by persons at whom the finger of disdain and scorn was pointed. 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.'

II. It was not that He was indifferent—I speak as a man—to sin in itself, or to sin in its consequences. It was not that He sanctioned a lower standard of judgment than that which was prescribed in God's holy law.

All felt, as they flocked around Him, that He who received them as sinners would not leave them in their sins. It was not only that He gave them the charge, however reasonable or however emphatic, Go and sin no more. It was only that they saw how inconsistent and how ungrateful would be their continuance in that bondage from which He came to set them free. There was this, but there was more. In that presence sin itself loosened its hold. Though they

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

men that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

And though they are not the meritorious causes of our final rewards (for where is merit, or where is goodness in any one of them?), yet they determine the degrees and the proportions of our final state, the five cities, or the ten. 'He will reward every man according as his work shall be.'

It would be the greatest presumption in us to say how God weighs our actions. It is sufficient to know that He does weigh them. That hand cannot err.

But we may, with the profoundest prostration of mind, carry out God's own metaphor a little way and conceive it thus.

Scales, so accurate and so sensitive that they could show the variation of the millionth of a grain, are in God's hand, and thus He loads them :

On the one side is the action ; on the other, what that action might have been, and ought to have been, and, but for our sin, would have been.

On the one side, the action we did ; on the other, the action we meant to do, and promised to do.

On the one side, the beautiful patterns in the heavens ; on the other, our poor copies !

On the one side, the fair-looking action ; on the other, the motive, the miserable motive, the mixed motive ; the self, the pride, the worldliness, that spoiled it all !

On the one side, what we have received ; on the other, what we have rendered.

On the one side, the action saying, in man's language, ' Good ! ' on the other, all our advantages, all our education, all our helps, all our light, all our grace, till that good action looks relatively bad.

On the one side, the gift ; on the other, the worldly recompense which we sought and had.

On the one side the action ; on the other side a blank. Where is the prayer ? Where is the thought in it ? Where is the patient continuing in it ? Where the good actions that were to follow it ? Where the real love of souls and of Jesus ?

But is this all ? Is this God's only way of weighing ? Is this a Father's way ? Far be it from us to do such wrong to Him who ' knoweth our frame, and knoweth we are dust,' who gave the prize to the widow's mite ; who said to the poor woman, ' She hath done what she could ! '

What weighings were there ! What kind thoughts went to make those calculations !

I see my poor, scant, unworthy actions on the one side, but who

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

has put on the other side my bad health, my many infirmities, my weak nerves, my headaches, my trying adverse circumstances, my regrets, my penitence?

I see the moral wrongness, but who has counterbalanced it with physical pain and physical incompetence?

The action is a failure; no results! but over-against it God has put the desire which was for His glory.

My action has much that was bad in it; but God sees much more the little bit of good, the very smallest speck of what is right.

‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?’ ‘Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!’

The act is a fall; but God saw on the other side, the force of the temptation, and the earnestness with which I attempted to resist it.

And much more than this. When God holds the scales of His children’s actions, He puts in something of His own over and above, and when He puts that in, the beam that had preponderated against us turns the other way, and it is all for us, and ‘mercy rejoiceth against judgment.’

All this and much more goes to make God’s method of weighing. And if all this be necessary to make any right result, may we not be very thankful that it is left to Him only really to judge any measure, any action, that is ever done in the world?

It is His prerogative. ‘By Him,’ none other, ‘by Him actions are weighed.’

Be careful not to usurp an office which only omniscience can rightly exercise.

Weigh indeed we must; but when you have done it to the best of your power, remember that there is One beyond you whose judgment will be far different from yours.

Leave your judgments with Him, with Him to weigh, who only can put in all the weights.

And be sure of this, that the more indulgently, the more lovingly, the more hopefully you weigh any person or any thing, the more you will weigh like God, therefore the more correct and sure the estimate will be.

But we should take a very narrow view of the subject, and leave it quite untrue, if we did not carry on the same great truth one step further.

We must all feel that when we are weighed in those holy scales the verdict of justice could only be, ‘Tekel; thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. Then why not ‘Upharsin’? And ‘divided and cut off from our kingdom’ we should be, and must be for ever, but that one great action, greater than all other actions put together, has taken place on this earth, and God has weighed it.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Lord Jesus Christ died upon the Cross. I see that death on the one side, and I see the whole world's guilt on the other. God is weighing them, the blood of Christ and the sins of all mankind. Again the scales are in His hands, and upon the issue depends our pardon or our condemnation; our heaven or our hell. For the price paid must cover the value of the thing that was purchased.

Now see how it stands. The sins are millions and millions of millions and millions of men; but millions and billions are still finite, that blood is infinite. The sins are the sins of man; that blood is the blood of the Son of God. Were He less than God, the plan of our redemption would fall to the ground; the ransom would not equal the Captor's right demand. But seeing He is the infinite God, guilt, all guilt, is light is the balance.

Were every atom in the universe, every moment of time, a sin, a multitude of sins, it would not reach to the measure of Godhead. And so God saw it, and as He saw it, He gave His sentence: 'Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.' 'Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.'

Take it to your great comfort. God has, in all His minutest accuracy and strictest justice, balanced you and your Substitute; and God is satisfied, for His sake, for ever and ever.

JAMES VAUGHAN.

Family Prayer.

Them that honour me I will honour. I SAMUEL ii. 30.

THIS is God's rule. Them that honour Him He will honour. Let a man make it his object in life, to bring to God all the honour that he can; to show that he remembers Him and regards Him and reverences Him, even when it is not likely to be noticed, even when it is inconvenient to himself, even when there might be many excuses found for postponing, omitting, or forgetting it; let a man live thus, and God who is thus honoured by him will in turn, as it is here written, honour him. He will cause men to see that a life of remembering God is, on the whole, in the long-run, a happy life and a successful life and an honoured life. In early years such a man may have gone through much; he may have been overlooked, he may have been passed by, he may have been despised; or again, he may have been pointed at, he may have been opposed, he may have been ridiculed; but, let him have held on his way quietly and steadfastly, let him have held his principles firmly, spoken the truth

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

in love, and above all things kept manfully to his great object, that of bringing to God Himself all the honour that he can ; and you will find that the path of that man has been ever a smoothing and a brightening path ; whatever his youth may have been, his mature age has been respected, his hoar hairs honoured, and his dying day bewailed. Them that honour me I will honour.

These remarks are perhaps too general to have found their way into the conscience. I proceed to a special application of the subject, for the sake of which I have chosen it from one of the Lessons for the day. The topic of my sermon is family prayer. I have reason to fear that it is one which will come home to some hearts with reproof and conviction. Let them not therefore cast it from them. Let them listen seriously to the few words now to be spoken, and, according as they shall judge, so let them act. God grant us all grace to listen in this practical, honest, and earnest spirit.

I need not spend a moment in explaining what is meant by the words ‘family prayer.’ They mean that prayer which is offered to God by an assembled family or household. Such devotion occupies an intermediate place between private and public worship. It partakes in some degree of the character of either. It is carried on at home, but not in the chamber ; it is carried on with others, yet not in the congregation. It has about it much of seclusion, but it aims not at secrecy.

Now let me suggest a few plain reasons for establishing and maintaining this sort of worship in every family.

I. And let me place first, as the text teaches us to do, this paramount consideration—family worship honours God.

II. Again, family worship elevates and consecrates and, in one word, Christianises family life.

III. Family worship has God’s promise, and will draw down God’s blessing. It is not only an honouring of God, and it is not only beneficial in what may be called its indirect effects upon the social life of a household, but it is itself an act of real communication with God, commanded by Him, and sure of His blessing.

Wherever two or three are gathered in the name of Christ, there is He in the midst of them. That which is taken for granted with regard to private prayer is expressly promised and asserted of social prayer, as though it needed a stronger encouragement, or as though (might we not almost say it?) it were in itself a yet higher act of faith. To feel within the limits of one’s own home that God’s blessing dwells there, that He in whom, whether as friend or foe, we must live and move and have our being, is not an enemy but a friend ; that whatever we have, His smile rests upon it, whatever we

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

do He precedes and follows it. He approves and He prospers it ; that the life which is lived within the sacred precincts of home is a life crowned with His favour, and therefore sweet, therefore happy ; this indeed is a comfort worth praying for, and this is that which family prayer daily invokes, and which, I fear we must add, without family prayer can scarcely be. The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Bible Theory of Man's Unhappiness.

And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my Father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger ! S. LUKE xv. 17.

I.  HERE are two tests to which we have a right to submit every new religion. There are two questions which we have a right, and which it is our duty, to put to every one who claims to come to us as a teacher from God. And these two questions are, first, 'What have you to tell us concerning the nature of God ?' and, secondly, 'What have you to tell us concerning the nature of man ?' We have the right, and it is our duty, to put these questions, because religion is the science of the relations between God and man. Every religion, therefore, that is properly so called, aims at giving us some information concerning these relations, and concerning the duties that arise out of them. It follows from this that every religion necessarily and primarily bases itself on certain facts, or alleged facts, in the nature of God and in the nature of man, which must condition and create those relations and those duties. What God is or may be to us, and what we are or may be to God, necessarily arise out of what God is in Himself, and what we are in ourselves. And therefore every religion must necessarily have its idea or theory concerning God, and its idea or theory concerning man. Now, of these two tests, it is quite clear which is the simplest and most easy to apply. Obviously the second. We do know the nature of man, or think we do. Of the divine nature we are necessarily and naturally in comparative ignorance. We do know something of human life and of its circumstances, and therefore he who tells us that concerning man's nature which we know to be untrue, has lost his

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

claim upon our attention when he goes on to tell us something concerning God. If he has told us earthly things that we simply cannot believe, how can we believe when he goes on to tell us of heavenly things? The hero of this story, the prodigal son, is, as you see, a sufferer, but he is more than that, he is an exceptional sufferer. All the other creatures described in the parable—the lower servants of the father's house—have bread enough and to spare; he alone suffers hunger. And more than this, he is a strangely exceptional sufferer, for he who suffers is infinitely superior to those who are happy. They are but the hired servants in the house, and he the son—raised above them all in nearness to the father and the ruler of the great household—he alone is perishing with hunger. Is this a true description, then, of humanity? is it true that man is unhappy, and that he is exceptionally unhappy? That man is unhappy we do know; that at least is mere commonplace human experience. Man's unhappiness is not only a fact, but it is an exceptional fact. Man is not only unhappy, but he is unquestionably the most unhappy creature in creation. By contrast with him all other creatures may be said to be happy. The strangest thing connected with the unhappiness of man is this: that he differs from all other creatures which we know of in this respect, that he is often unhappy directly in proportion to the degree and extent to which he obeys his own nature. Consider this for a moment. All animals that we know of, save man, seem to be subject to this twofold law. Each animal has its instincts, its desires, its appetites, and in the climate or element in which it exists there are corresponding objects of gratification for those appetites and those desires. Given the concurrence of these two, given the appetite that craves, given the object that satisfies that appetite, and the animal is perfectly happy in itself and needs no more. It has the portion of goods that falleth to it, and it, therefore, desires and seeks no more. Now, rise from the animal to the man; pass on, as we are told life has passed, by slight and imperceptible gradations, from the lowest to the highest stage of animal existence, to the human animal, in which there is but a slight anatomical difference of structure and nature between the anthropoid creature and man, and then you come to the strange fact that this law is altogether reversed; you come to deal with a creature who is, as I have said, eminently unhappy, just because he has obeyed the strongest impulses and largely enjoyed the gratification of the instincts of his being. We know that this is so, and we know the true source of pain is that he tastes and enjoys, and fulfils the strongest appetites of his nature. He is pained from two different causes, and they are mighty factors in the pain of suffering humanity. One is the pain of satiety, and the other the pain of remorse. Give the man all the portion of goods

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

that can fall to him, or that in his wildest dreams of covetousness and ambition he can desire for himself; give him health, wealth, strength, keen intellect, vivid imagination, gratified ambitions—give him all these, and heap them on him in the abundance of wealth, and let him revel in the fulness of his enjoyment; and if human history and human experience tell us anything, they tell us this: that when he has enjoyed these to the very full, and just because he has enjoyed them, there begins to be felt a famine in his enjoyment, and there comes the weariness of satiety into his heart and soul. The eye is not satisfied with all its seeing nor the ear with all its hearing, and weary, *blasé*, and exhausted by the very pursuit of pleasure, which still something in him compels him to pursue, and draws him on and on in the pursuit, the man wearies of his very life. He feels that, somehow or other, his life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.

II. The Bible theory of man is this, that he is not his true self, that he is a creature not in his proper and true element. What the Bible tells us concerning man is this, that he differs from all other creatures in the universe, not in a fine and imperceptible degree, but in kind; not in anatomical differences of structure, but in this essential difference, that the God who made him—whether it were by an instant act of creation or by infinitely protracted creative act of evolution—in the hour when He produced man on the earth, He made him and fashioned him in His own image, and gave him that mystery of mysteries, a spiritual nature, with a free and self-determining will; and that it is the nature of this spirit of man that only in communion with and obedience to the Spirit which made it can it find its true happiness, that the only place where he can be happy, if he can attain to it, if he can find it, is the Father's home. It tells us more. It tells us that it has been the curse and the disorganisation of the nature of man, that in the exercise of this strange and mysterious spiritual power of which I have spoken, the power of free will, he has wandered away from the Father's home and claimed the selfish and solitary possession of the goods that the Father lavished upon him. It tells us that the origin of all human sin and sorrow has been this, that he has said, 'Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me,' give me the wealth of the imagination, the treasures of the affections, the strength of the intellect, give me all that makes me and glorifies me as a man, let me carry all these away into the far country of selfish possession and enjoyment without God. The Bible tells us that man's misery is the result of this vain effort to do in this world of God without the God who made him, that his weariness comes from this, that all the immense *ennui* of life, all the wretchedness of satiety that make man from time to time, and now more than ever, ask, 'Is

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

life worth the living ? ' is but the sublime discontent of the soul that was made to rest in its God, and cannot rest in anything less than God ; the soul that was made to find its peace and enjoyment, its aliment and sustenance in the infinite God, and cannot rest and cannot satisfy itself until it finds peace in the infinite. This is the Bible explanation of the satiety of man, and of the remorse of man when the lower part of his nature conquers the higher. It tells him that which nothing else can tell him, that which no scientific or anatomical analysis of his nature, no human psychology, can ever prove to him, that the voice within him that claims a sovereignty is the voice of the rightful sovereign ; that the voice of conscience is nothing less than the echo of the voice of God, that the claim of this disrowned and dethroned monarch to rule is a rightful claim, that it lost its power to rule when the spirit of man revolted against God, its ruler, and lost thereby its command over its own lower vassals, the appetites, which rise in perpetual rebellion and strife against it, but is still the rightful monarch ; and that the misery of his soul comes from this revolt of his nature, that he is not a true man when he is miserable, that it is because he is living in an element unsuited to him that he is unhappy. It tells him more than this. It tells him that which revelation alone can tell him, that there is a remedy for his unhappiness. ' Rise up and go to your Father.'

III. Are these but theories against theories ? Are we but opposing a dream with a dream when we set the dream of the scientist against the dream of the religionist ? Not so. Our religion is a historical religion. It bases itself upon one life in the past ; it is ever renewing and revealing itself in many lives ever since that life was lived on earth. It bases itself on one life, and that life was a perfect life, the life of One who, all through His existence, as far as we can know it—and the story of His life, if we accept it as true at all, reveals to us the very innermost workings and thoughts of that soul and heart—a perfect life, a life unstained by impurity, a life unvexed and unharassed by sensual or evil impulses—it was a life that was passed in entire and complete obedience to the will of the Father. His, therefore, was a soul that never knew the hunger of the exiled and rebellious son, because it was ' meat and drink to Him to do His Father's will ' ; and He who gives us this picture of human unhappiness as consisting in the wandering from the Father's home was Himself the most perfectly obedient Son. And that is not all. That life which He lived, that perfect life of obedience—of which all its sorrow only came from without, and only came from the fact that all around Him were not like Him, equally obedient—that life, He tells us, He can supernaturally give to us. Oh, young man, whose feet are even now passing along the meeting-place of these two ways, the

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

leading to life and the other to death, try but one step on the right way, try now and let it be the very advent to your soul of your Lord and Saviour; try to trust His word, try to obey His teaching, and say, 'I will arise and go to my Father, and say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee.'

ARCHBISHOP MAGEE.

The Life of Samuel.

Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. I SAMUEL iii. 9.

THE life of Samuel was great, regarding him as the instrument which God chose for changing the civil polity of His chosen people—to Samuel was intrusted the inauguration of the kingdom of Israel. The change was no slight one; changes in the polity of any people cannot be contemplated without anxiety and risk to those who make them; in the case of Israel, the risk was peculiar. The desire for an earthly king was an insult to Jehovah. The thing displeased Samuel when it was proposed, nevertheless he rose above the apparent difficulties of his work. His trust in God was greater than in the means which hitherto had been employed, and at the Lord's command he gave the people their request; and not only in the civil polity of the Jews does Samuel mark an epoch, but in their religious polity also Samuel stands at the head of the great succession of prophets whom God sent to His people. S. Peter plainly gives Samuel this position when he says, 'Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after,' and greater still perhaps was Samuel in the real history of the world as God and angels see it, for he was the man called by God to anoint David the king, the type of the Son of David, the Messiah. We have then in Samuel, if not the greatest character we could select, at least the character of one who stands out among men with a prominence which may reasonably arrest our attention.

I. First, then, I desire to call your attention to the recorded fact, that this great character comes before us in connection with the dedication of the child by its parents. We all know the story: the solitude of Hannah, the provocations of her adversary, the unspiritual suspicion of the priest, her perseverance in the bitterness of her soul, her prayers, her tears, her vow, 'O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but will give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life,' and we know how the Lord at last heard her prayer, and how in due time

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Hannah went again to Shiloh, and took the child with her, and brought the child to Eli, and standing on the very spot, as it would seem, where she had stood before, poured forth her gratitude, and said, 'Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord—for this child I prayed: and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him; therefore, also, have I lent him' (or returned him) to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent (or returned) to the Lord. What the future of the child was to be, the mother was not told, how great he would become in the religious and civil history of her people, she did not know; to her the gift was absolute, and made in faith; her own comfort, her mother's pride, the revenge upon her adversary—all this she sacrificed, and gave him to the Lord. My brethren, is there not something here written for our learning which we have not fully learned? We see in Samuel the judge, the founder, it may be, of the school of the prophets, a man who in his day was great, a leader of thought, the benefactor of his nation, a character which men might well wish to imitate, and whose greatness parents might well envy for their sons. But do parents do all they can to lend (return) their children to the Lord? If great men avail themselves of the tendencies of their day, and do raise their own, and help forward the generation that follows; if God is educating humanity, leading it, bringing it to Himself, may we not be keeping back the true progress of our race by failing to place the highest power we possess in the hands of the Ruler of all, by accepting these immortal instruments from Him, but failing to give them back to Him, to work His will as long as He may require them.

I know that I am approaching most holy ground, I am aware that I am speaking of that which I cannot by experience understand, but I cannot shake it out of my mind, and I am constrained again and again to say, Is there not something here which we have not fully learnt?

II. But there is a second point in the record of the life of Samuel which perhaps more immediately concerns those whom I am addressing, and that is, his call to God's service.

How long the child Samuel had been with the priest at Shiloh when the call of God came to him, we are not told. It would seem that he was yet but a youth. A tradition among the Jews tells us that he was but twelve years of age. The Bible is full of the history of the calls of God. They have been made in various ways. To Abram the simple word was given, 'The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house unto a land that I shall show thee.' At another time the Lord appeared to the same Abram in a vision. To Jacob the call came in

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

a dream, and he heard those words which must ever find a response in the hearts of all who are leaving their homes for the first time, and setting out on the work of life: 'Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into the land; for I will not leave thee till I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.' To Gideon the call was sent in the appearance of an angel, 'The angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.' To the prophet Elisha the call came through the words and symbolical action of a man of like passions with ourselves; and to some of the Apostles by the open manifestation of the Incarnate Son of God Himself, 'Jesus findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me.' To others the call came through those whom Jesus had already called: Philip findeth Nathanael . . . Philip saith unto him, 'Come and see.'

Thus, the mode of the call has been various, and the manner in which the call has been received has been various also. Some have fled from it, as far as we know, never to return, like the rich young ruler, who, when called by the Lord Himself to sell all that he had and follow Him, 'went away sorrowing.' Some fled from it for a time, like Jonah, but afterwards repented and went; many accept in fear and trembling, overwhelmed with the sense of their own nothingness, and unable to believe that their services could be required by the Almighty. Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God, and felt the apparent hopelessness of a shepherd's slave influencing a Pharaoh in the administration of his kingdom. 'Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?' Gideon could not at first reconcile with a divine call the apparently forsaken condition of the chosen people in his own day, when compared with the manifestation of God's power in days of old. 'Oh my Lord,' he cried, 'if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of?' He felt the littleness of his own social position, the apparent hopelessness of his becoming a saviour in Israel. 'Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.' Others, indeed, have been enabled to receive the call of God with greater calmness and more ready trust; it may be that this was a reward of their greater innocence and simpler faith; thus the child Samuel, though at first he knew not the Lord, yet repeated simply what he was told to say: 'Speak, for Thy servant heareth.' And more simple, more trustful still, are the words by which the greatest call that was ever made to man was answered, 'Be it unto me according to Thy word.' God still calls men to His service, and the meaning of the call is the same as of old, though the manner of the

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

call is changed. It is a claim from Almighty God on the will and choice of man for a free and unconditional service; it means self-surrender, a perfect readiness for all that may be required; it may come in various ways, by sickness, by accident, by the death of friends, by the punishment in another of the same sin we ourselves had almost committed; or more commonly, and perhaps more surely, by an inward increasing conviction, by the slow, yet overruling bearing of experience, by that many-sided, complex kind of evidence which is made up of numberless warnings, encouragements, unmistakable indications of the divine will. The great hindrance to this line of thought is, with many men, that it seems too good to be true. They cannot believe that God Almighty can really require their aid in carrying out His great purposes with mankind, and yet by all who rightly believe in God this objection must be given up. We know that He employs the means He has already made; we know that man is the crown and glory, the priest and king of creation; we are made to find out and master the forces of this world, to subdue the earth, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth—we are, indeed, all made in the image and likeness of God; we are so made that we can have communion with Him, can walk with Him, can be fellow-workers together with God. This is true of us all; and many of us from our childhood have been taught to say, ‘My bounden duty is to prepare to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me’—this is true of us all. We were all taught to expect to be called by God. None are too poor, too humble, too little gifted—all are to be fellow-workers with Him.

There are others to whom this difficulty does not present itself, but they are discouraged by the toil and drudgery which they find necessary for the work of life. The lowliness of this labour seems incompatible with the reality of a divine call. But such persons must remember that God’s calls to His service are to be received with the general scheme of His goodwill. We are still to be lords of creation, but not with such ease as we might have been—in the sweat of our face we must eat our bread. No gifts of genius can exempt from toil; the Son of God Himself, when in our nature He dwelt on this earth, was tired and suffered.

God’s call will not free us from wearisomeness—none can reach their full efficiency who will live without exertion. Effort is bound up in the life we have to live—nay, it often is so that our chief gifts, the powers which bring us most distinction, which are used by us with the greatest ease, are made dependent for their full efficiency on the diligent and painful cultivation of powers in which we shall never excel. With this condition of labour there is often another for which

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

men are not sufficiently prepared, the condition of waiting—waiting in preparation until the chief call of life fully comes. Life is already a mystery to us—even in this world we know not to what we may be called, what our future opportunities and responsibilities may be. Moses and Daniel for many years seemed to be shut out from the immediate service of God—in Egypt and Babylon; their duty was to learn the highest lessons of wisdom and learning which heathen philosophy could teach them. They enriched themselves with these treasures. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Daniel had skill in all learning and wisdom ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in the realm, yet neither Moses nor Daniel knew to what account all this learning would be turned. Many weeks and months, and years of laborious, painful learning were passed in exile before they understood the meaning of their lives, and before they could clearly see how patient learning in heathen studies was the preparation for the future call to the direct service of God. The truth is, the sense of duty which tells us in early life to obey, and take the task that is set us, to be sensitive and watchful for the indication of the circumstances of our lives; this sense of duty, the pressure of the light yoke of early responsibility, is itself the call of God—not the great call which tells us what the chief work of our life is to be, but a real call full of more future value than at the time appears.

III. There is a third and last circumstance connected with the life of Samuel to which I desire to direct your attention. The message which Samuel was called to deliver to the people of his day he was told plainly was a message at which the 'ears of every one that heard it should tingle.' The message required that at once he should announce to the aged Eli, the friend and protector of his youth, the destruction of his family before God; and later in his ministry the message required him to tell the very king whom he had anointed for the people, that the Lord had rejected him from being king.

The message which Samuel was called to deliver clearly implied courage. And this perhaps is more commonly needed than at first we suppose. Men take for granted they are not cowards, but they do not always reckon on the high degree of courage which a true life requires. We may not all be called to deliver a message at which the ears of all who hear it will tingle, but there is an element of reproof contained in all messages of the truth, in whatever line of life they are to be delivered. In all great lives there is an element of reproof, and also of singularity and of loneliness, from which men naturally shrink, and which they require real courage to maintain. Each man has a work to do which is his own and not another's. And in it in some degree he must be alone. From One only he need never

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

feel alone; from Him who called him to the work he has to do, and with whom and in whom the life's work should be done.

BISHOP KING.

Christ's People a Happy People.

Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! DEUT. xxxiii. 29.

TWO things are stated in reference to Christ's people. There is stated:

I. Their happy condition.

There can be no doubt of this. For God Himself says—

1. They are happy.

'Happy art thou, O Israel.' They are happy in the knowledge that the Lord is their God. 'Happy are the people that are in such a case, yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord.' Israel of old was thus a happy people. They were happy in that they were God's people.

But there are greater things than these. The Lord not only affirms that 'His people are happy,' but that—

2. They are the happiest of all mankind.

S. Paul says that, if the believer had hope only in this life, he would be of all men most miserable. But he has hope of a glorious eternity, and this makes him of all men the happiest. The Lord therefore says of you, who are His redeemed and converted people, 'Who is like unto thee?' With such prospects, even in this world, there is no one so happy as the true Christian. You may be as poor as was Lazarus; yet, like him, in all your poverty, and with all your sickness, you are far happier than some rich unconverted neighbour, in all his wealth, and in all his sumptuous fare and purple raiment. You may be shut out from the society of the gay and of the rich, as was Elijah at Cherith; yet, like him, you are strangers to the unquiet and restless desires that are working in some Ahab or some Jezebel, whose higher position in life you are sometimes tempted to covet. You may be exposed to trials and persecutions, as were Paul and Silas; but, like them, you are able to sing the songs of Zion even in your midnight dungeon, while your persecutors, in dread of some future miseries, are so unhappy that they are calling for a sword to put away their own lives.

You have seen the happiness of the Lord's people. Now consider—

II. How it is effected.

This happiness is effected by their assurance—

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

1. Of salvation.
2. Of protection.

The Lord Jesus Himself is your shield. The Lord Jesus Himself is your sword. Oh, what can stop your progress? What can keep you out of heaven? Think of your present position and privileges. The righteousness in which you are justified is an everlasting righteousness. In Christ Jesus you are as safe as though you were now standing round about His throne on high. Being one with Christ by His life-giving Spirit, you are bound up, as it were, in the bundle of life with Him. The eternal God is your refuge and your Redeemer. His everlasting arms form your unfailing support. All His perfections are engaged in your behalf. He will hasten to your assistance whenever you are assailed. He will guard your peace and shield your character. He will choose your inheritance for you, and give you the possession of it.

I would now apply the subject. You have seen the privileges of the Lord's people.

We see hence—

III. 'A nation's security.'

The weakness of a nation is sin. Its strength is its godliness. Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people. Look at Israel of old. How strong and invincible were they as long as they obeyed their Lord! But as soon as, through their sins, the Lord turned His back upon them, how easily they were made a prey to the Canaanites, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Romans, and every other enemy! The Great Ruler of the universe deals not with sinful nations as He deals with individual transgressors. With individual transgressors He deals, for the most part, in the world to come. He thus lets many an impenitent sinner go through life without sorrow. These men He reserves for punishment in the eternal world; and as soon as their breath goeth forth their everlasting misery begins. But God deals with nations in this world. He does so because nations will not exist hereafter.

IV. 'The believer's duty.'

That duty is so to live as not to provoke God to draw from you the light of His countenance. If God be with you, you will in every spiritual conflict be brought off more than conquerors. But if you provoke God to leave you to your own devices, dark days and comfortless nights will be your portion. In God's presence, even in this life, is joy. When He is absent, as many of you know by your own bitter experience, all joy is gone, and nothing remains but coldness, desolation, and gloom. If, therefore, you would be distinguished for your happiness, seek to be distinguished for your holiness.

C. CLAYTON.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The Father's Honour.

If I be a father, where is Mine honour? MAL. i. 6.

THIS pathetic appeal, clothed in the unrivalled poetry of Bible language, presents the obvious corollary to our consideration of last Sunday, inasmuch as it contains the authoritative declaration that the claim of God upon the confidence and obedience of man is based upon the unalterable fact that man is the son of God. For the answer to this ceaseless appeal to the filial instinct of humanity the world's Father stands waiting with tireless patience and unspeakable compassion at the door of every heart. 'If I be Father!' The eternal verity upon which human lives are based, the great fundamental idea of Christianity, is that He is Father, and that 'the Father is greater than all, and no man can snatch out of the Father's hand.' There is a stage in the spiritual development of most lives when this transcendent truth passes from a dim instinct into a radiant certainty; it is the stage of 'knowing the Lord.' The instinct of sonship has never been absent from the race; the purest affections, the most inward desires of man have ever longed to worship a Father in spirit and truth. The ancient Aryans spoke of the Eternal as 'Dyauspiter,' the Greeks as 'Zeus Pater,' the Latins as 'Jupiter,' the Norsemen as 'Thor,' each word foreshadowing, with stammering lips, the Paternoster, our Heaven-Father.

I. Just here comes in the searching power of the individual application of the appeal of God for the spiritual evolution of man, 'If I be a Father, where is Mine honour?'

The clearness with which we severally hear God's voice is the ratio of our knowledge of the Father. Why did Samuel, as recorded in the Old Testament chapter to which we have just listened, mistake, in the dim silence of the temple at midnight, the impact of the universal mind upon his mind, which is the whisper of God, for the voice of Eli? Why did he, even when instructed by Eli, persist in replying to the voice as if it were a natural phenomenon or a nameless force, and saying to it, 'Speak,' instead of recognising the nearness of the overruling parent Spirit, and replying, as he was told, 'Speak, Lord?' The significant omission betrays the standpoint; we are told in language emphatic and suggestive, 'Samuel knew not the Lord.' Obviously he had been instructed in the tenets of Hebrew Deism: he had been taught dependence on the tribal Deity, the Jehovah of the Jewish race, banished from contact with humanity, except when jealousy moved Him to wrath, or sacrifice propitiated His anger; but He knew not the Lord. The fulness of time for the

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

final unveiling of universal Fatherhood had not come. He knew not the measureless love in which all men have their being. He knew not that as the dewdrop mirrors the sun, the inmost consciousness of each individual man mirrors the universal consciousness of God; and that because man lives and moves and has his being in God, every voice, every soul-pressure, every trial, every desolation, every high thought flashing across the mental vision, every tender emotion and noble instinct causing us to shrink from what is base, treacherous, or impure, are not the automatic outcome of human vitality, but the breathings, the drawings, the pleadings of the Spirit of universal Fatherhood, and must receive from the soul of man the answer—adoring, confident, obedient—‘Speak, Lord.’ The test then of knowing the Lord is hearing the voice; ears that are deafened by the din of second causes hear not the voice. How widespread is this deafness, even amongst those genuinely wishful, as was Samuel, to respond, but who, while they believe in God, know not the Lord. It is not possible to define the pressure of the Father-Spirit of God upon the son-spirit of man; it is unremitting, all-surrounding, like the pressure of the air. It ever sounds in the mystic temple of man’s inmost, appealing to his true self, calling ‘Samuel, Samuel,’ in the mysterious recesses of his being. The bond between God and the soul was not invented or discovered or manufactured—it is. ‘Sight, hearing, these were not discovered—they are. Light appeals to man because he has sight, sound because he has hearing; the sense necessitates the sensation.’ The universal Soul, which is God, appeals to the differentiated soul, which is man, because man is; but the universal Soul appeals through second causes, and thousands answer the second cause instead of answering the universal Soul; they reply, ‘Speak,’ but they do not reply, ‘Speak, Lord.’ The solemn beauties of nature, for example, speak movingly to many a soul. Man ‘feels a presence that disturbs him with the joy of elevated thoughts,’ and his answer is: ‘Speak, great unity of natural law’; ‘Speak, ceaseless activity of self-existent force’; ‘Speak, mighty roll of ocean, thy servant heareth.’ Again the pathos of destitution, misery, human suffering make their appeal; and the answer is: ‘Speak, instinct of benevolence; speak, ethics of altruism; the tears are in thy servant’s eyes, his purse is open, he heareth.’ Ofttimes the anguish of personal sorrow, physical pain, family bereavement, breaks in upon the life, and the heart answers: ‘Speak, inevitable doom of man! I am submissive, resigned; thy servant heareth.’ But these good Samuels know not the Lord. Their response to second causes is heroic, it helps to ennoble the dreary waste of human selfishness, but its horizon is too limited; it ignores the sublime bond between God and man; it is blind to the fact that the universe, like Moses’s bush, is

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

afflame with God's presence; that the love of the Father is the appeal veiled under the second cause of the destitution that moves our pity; the fulness and depth of a Father's educative care are arranging the sorrow, the bereavement, the pain to which we patiently, but fatalistically, submit. All circumstances are His second causes. 'The thing that is done upon earth He doeth it Himself.' The voice crying, 'Samuel, Samuel,' is His; it is His heart pulsing into ours, and He is longing for the answer to be given, clear, true, and trusting: 'Though Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, I see Thee in Thy concealment behind the second cause; Thy will be done, Thy will is always best; whom have I in heaven or on earth but Thee? It is the Lord; Speak on, Lord, for Thy servant heareth; for Thou art our Father, and our Father is greater than all, and no man is able to snatch out of our Father's hand.'

II. 'The mind stayed on God.'

It is not difficult to see how this truth, as it shines into the soul, reaches to the sources of man's being, and suggests the attitude of life which alone can respond to the Father's appeal, 'Where is Mine honour?' The conscious moral act whereby a son of God accepts the challenge is deliberate mental disentanglement from second causes, and the recognition of God in every concern in life, from the most momentous to the most minute; deliberate opening of the inmost sanctuary of his being (that centre whence resolve and action take their origin) to the highest, noblest impulses; deliberate recollection when fighting temptation, when enduring discipline, when disgusted with self, when baffled by circumstances, that the divine secret of imperishable sonship, which must ultimately conquer the empire of evil, is within, and the purpose of the Father around. A life lived in this attitude, though falling far short of ideal goodness, and darkened at times by despondency, will be ascending, progressive, aspiring. As second causes fade, as the life becomes more and more embosomed in God, its motto more and more that of the Solitaires of Biarritz, 'Dieu Seul,' the moral sensibilities are strengthened, irritations are less provoking, problems less perplexing, temptations less powerful; the Father is keeping such an one in perfect peace because his mind is stayed on Him. Such a life, however, will not be barren; it will produce its God-honouring results mainly in three separate forms of activity, which may well be noted as a thermometer wherewith to measure the temperature of our realisation of Fatherhood. The Father's demand, 'Where is Mine honour?' is not satisfied without witness, enthusiasm, and loyalty. The duty of witness is clear and inalienable. No son of God can claim exemption. There is overmuch false shame in the family of God, which His children extenuate by calling it reserve. Not a few, possibly,

ILLUSTRATIONS

would be ashamed to be discovered on their knees, even by members of their own household. A Mussulman is not ashamed to be seen on his knees. In the open space within the walls of the immense Mosque of the Jumma Musjid at Delhi, I have seen two thousand men at once upon their knees, or rather prostrate on their faces. A Mussulman at Peshawur expressed surprise to hear that prayer was part of the Christian faith; he never remembered to have seen a Christian on his knees. One occupied in business in London, whose belief in the Fatherhood of God is a life-controlling power, described to me a scene amongst scoffing sceptical companions. In mockery one challenged him to kneel down and pray. The Lord gave him the courage to do so on the spot, and in simple, heartfelt terms he sought blessing for them all. In an instant the mockery ceased. Silent and thoughtful they left him without a word. It cost him much, but it was worth what it cost. God was his Father; he knew it, and gave Him honour.

III. 'Loyalty to the Fatherhood.'

Finally, the honour of Almighty Fatherhood demands loyalty; loyalty to the heavenly citizenship, loyalty to the guidance of the eternal Spirit, the evolving power which, in the infinite complexity of human affairs, is quietly working through discord to harmony.

The Spirit of God is the spirit of truth; and abiding truth, truth that becomes incorporated into the civilisation of the world, is the product of strongly opposite views, held almost in exaggeration by men of equal earnestness. From the friction of to-day comes the stored electricity for to-morrow; from the divergencies of one age come the accepted truths of the next; and when 'cometh the end,' and the Father is all in all, we shall know that the friction, the maze, the perplexity of our lives has not been in spite of, but because of, His will; because 'love, and love alone, is creation's final law.'

CANON WILBERFORCE.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS.

Humility. LET the young imitate Elihu's humility. Though competent to speak best, he spoke last.
S. LUKE xvii. 9-14.

It well becomes us to confess ourselves to be miserable offenders, when even Job abhorred himself, and said, 'Behold, I am vile.' He who knows himself best, will esteem himself least.

Humility, by not seeking, obtains what it contemns.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

The answer of Augustine to the question, 'What is the first thing in religion?' Humility. 'And what is the second?' Humility. 'And what the third?' Humility. Augustine said truly, when speaking of pride, 'That which first overcame man, is the last thing he overcomes.'

The progress which S. Paul made in humility has often been given by comparing three expressions in his epistles with the supposed dates when they were written. 'Not meet to be called an apostle' (1 Corinthians xv. 9), A.D. 59; 'Less than the least of all saints' (Ephesians iii. 8), A.D. 64; 'Sinners of whom I am chief' (1 Timothy i. 15), A.D. 65.

Humility. WE shall view our characters more truly, much more S. LUKE xvii. 9-14. safely, when we view them in their defects, and faults, and infirmities, than when we view them only on the side of their good qualities. . . . The custom of viewing our virtues has a strong tendency to fill us with fallacious notions of our own state and condition. . . . Let us leave our virtues to themselves. . . . Our business is with our sins. . . . They who are truly humble-minded have no quarrels, give no offence, contend with no one in wrath and bitterness; still more impossible is it for them to insult any man, under any circumstances. In reading the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, I should say of them, that the one had just come from ruminating upon his virtues, the other from meditating upon his sins. Mark the difference: first, in their behaviour; next, in their acceptance with God. The Pharisee is all loftiness, and contemptuousness, and recital, and comparison; full of ideas of merit; views the poor Publican, although withdrawn to a distance from him, with eyes of scorn. The Publican, on the contrary, enters not into competition with the Pharisee, or with any one. So far from looking round, he durst not so much as lift up his eyes; but casts himself—hardly, indeed, presumes to cast himself—not upon the justice, but wholly and solely upon the mercies of his Maker: 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.' We know the judgment which our Lord Himself pronounced upon the case: 'I tell you this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other,' The more, therefore, we are like the Publican, and the less we are like the Pharisee, the more we come up to the genuine temper of Christ's religion.

Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE	ROMANS VIII. 18-23.
GOSPEL	S. LUKE VI. 36-43.
FIRST MORNING LESSON	1 SAMUEL XII.
FIRST EVENING LESSON	1 SAMUEL XIII. OR RUTH I.
SECOND LESSONS	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Importance and Supernatural Character of Faith.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. S. MATTHEW xvi. 13-17.



TWO truths lie upon the surface of this narrative, so plain that he that runs may read. The first is the importance attached by our Lord to faith in Himself; and the other, the supernatural character of such faith, as the gift of God.

I. The importance attached by our Lord to faith in Himself, for here there comes to the surface the end for which He had separated and was training the Twelve; it was that they might gain a firm and unqualified faith in Himself, that they might know how to confess and

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

profess His name. He had looked steadily at human nature when it made to Him its first offer of service. He had seen the unstable shifting character of its enthusiasm, the secret taint of sin and selfishness which marred its high endeavours, and deliberately He had refused to commit Himself and His cause to such advocacy. When He was at Jerusalem, it is written, 'At the Passover many believed in His name when they saw the miracles that He did, but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.' It was not that He distrusted the capacity of men for the highest ends: on the contrary, He was come to bring men back into union with the Father, and to make them fellow-workers with God. But He distrusted human nature as He found it. He knew, to start with, that sad secret which in slow and embittering experience has so often turned enthusiasts into cynics and made philanthropists mad, the sad secret of human untrustworthiness. He knew it, and because He knew it, He could not build the spiritual fabric of His kingdom upon the shifting sands of unregenerate human nature. 'Except ye be converted,' He said, 'ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven'; 'except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.' Humanity, that is to say, must make a fresh start, and that fresh start must be from Jesus Christ. 'No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.' 'I am the Way'; 'I am come that they might have life'; 'Come unto Me.' If they would be really restored, redeemed, set right, He assured them, they must look away from all else and be content to follow Him, and not merely to follow Him, but to believe in Him, to contemplate Him, till they understood the meaning of His mission, the secret of His Person, till behind the human leader and friend, and Son of Man, they discerned the Christ, the Son of God, their Lord and their God. Thus, to create this faith in Himself, He turns from the crowd, and separates the Twelve, that little band of men who will stand the preliminary test of obedience and be trained to forsake all and follow Him. These He takes to be with Him, these He trains into unreserved belief in His Person, so that in these He can at the last find a firm nucleus for a permanent work, the solid core of regenerate humanity. He trains them by intercourse with Himself. Thus He gradually lets them feel the authority of His word, the absolute claim, the claim of very God, which He makes and presses upon the wills and consciences of men; He lets them see His works, the life-giving power that inheres in Him and flows out from Him, that power which is only the expression of the same self as finds utterance in His teaching, the same expression, only now in outward act and now in spoken word and in fact. The authoritative words

COMPLETE SERMON

of our Lord, and His life-giving deeds, carrying with them the intimation so unmistakable of a Presence more than human, though so truly human, these silently, gradually, took possession of the Apostles' minds. They passed from love and admiration unto awe and worship. Behind the Manhood they begin to discern the God-head. This dawning conviction is disciplined by apparent failure. Our Lord becomes unpopular with all classes, His words offend, many of His disciples go back and walk no more with Him. Then it is that our Lord, by questioning the little band of Twelve, seeks to elicit from them the explicit confession of His name. It was in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, a place the very name of which, recalling as it did the foreign domination of the Cæsars, had a depressing sound to the natural hopes and aspirations of patriotic Jews, it was here that He draws out from them the expression of a faith and hope which welled up from springs deeper than mere nationalism, deeper than anything which was contained within the scope of their own natures. 'Whom do men say that I am?' He asks them first, and they give Him the various rumours that were abroad about Him, that He was John the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the prophets, and He makes no comment. The outer world might speak thus of Him vaguely as of something wonderful and extraordinary, without caring to examine more closely into His claim, but of them who were to constitute His Church an exacter knowledge is required. Upon them He presses the question closely home, 'Whom do ye say that I am?' And silence falls upon the little band, for it is hard to put into words a struggling and half-formed conviction; but a conviction to gain a reality must dare to utter itself, and S. Peter it is who obeys the promptings of the Spirit which all were secretly acknowledging. 'Thou art the Christ,' he cries, 'the Son of the living God.' This is what our Lord had wanted, that is what He was waiting for. He fixes, He stereotypes, this confession with His benediction: 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, and I say unto thee, in virtue of this thy bold confession, thou art Peter, Rock-man; this confession of My name turns the shifting sands of humanity into solid rock; upon this rock will I build My Church, and the gates of hell, of death, shall not prevail against it. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, blessed art thou, for faith in Jesus Christ is the one necessity of man's redemption: blessed art thou, because this fundamental act of faith is not of thyself, or of anything visible or tangible, or merely human; flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.'

It was not that our Lord despised flesh and blood. No. Why, in that case, should He have taken it? But, as on another occasion He says, 'The flesh profiteth nothing,' merely the bare flesh, the

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

flesh of itself, so now He means that humanity of itself can never discover God, or find Him out. The recognition of God must always be God's own disclosure of Himself in the heart of man. So it is in conscience, we do not discover God, but He makes Himself felt. So it is further on in the recognition of God Incarnate in Jesus; He is Incarnate; He has taken flesh and blood; 'forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same.' In flesh He showed Himself, as Man he dwelt with man. He uses human methods; it was through the experience of His true Manhood that the Twelve became conscious of His Godhead; through flesh and blood they knew Him, and in the same flesh and blood they were to have eternal fellowship with Him. His Flesh was to be their meat, His Blood to be their drink. Yet nothing that flesh and blood could do would ever amount to either imparting life or creating conviction. If, on His part, His Flesh and Blood are to be life-giving, that is because they are not mere flesh and blood, but something much more, Spirit and life-quickenings Spirit; if, on their part, the reflections, the reasonings, the evidences, the intuitions, of human nature can amount to real conviction, the real conviction of personal faith, that must be because there is something divine working behind and in their manhood. Miracles of themselves cannot convince, reasonings of themselves cannot convince, no evidences can create faith. 'No man can come unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.' Faith always must be a divine gift, God's disclosure of Himself. 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.'

We pass a stage downwards in Church history. Still we find the Apostles teaching the same lessons of faith which they had themselves learned. Everything, according to S. Paul, depends on faith. The salvation which the Church has to offer, it offers on the terms of faith, and on none other. It is not that the Church presumes to limit God's freedom of working where He will, and revealing Himself in His own time and way to every soul which, however blindly and ignorantly, yet really seeks Him. There is no final rejection of a soul, we know, except because it instinctively and finally refuses the light and loves the darkness; but the Church has a gospel to proclaim, an offer of God to publish, and this offer, this covenant of salvation, is made on no other terms than those of faith; faith, conscious and deliberate, in the person of Christ, faith which is able to express itself in propositions: 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.'

Here is the necessity for faith in Christ, which Christ Himself taught His Apostles, and the Apostles proclaimed to the world; and

COMPLETE SERMON

the Church can never let that utterance die or diminish aught of its peremptory claim. 'Dost thou believe that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God?' so the Church must always cross-question her catechumen at the gate of baptism. Dost thou believe Him Incarnate, crucified, risen, glorified, the Judge of all? If so, thou hast the secret of salvation, thou too canst fall into the ranks of that mighty movement of redeemed humanity which, as it traverses the ages, follows the uplifted banner of the Cross, and when it would sing its hymn of human progress, recites instinctively the creed of the Apostle's.

S. Paul, like His Master, then, asserts the necessity of faith, and also its supernatural character. 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.' It is the same truth that we learned from our Lord. There is, in the Apostolic age, in place of Christ's miracles and words, the Apostolic witness, firm, unhesitating, unanimous, that they had seen the risen Lord. There is the simple strength of apostolic teaching, the record of what they saw and touched and handled, and heard of the Word of Life. There is the evidence of miracles still among men. There is the moral argument of souls converted, and sins forgiven, and lives sanctified. But not all these things taken together can produce faith. Over and above these, and giving the meaning to these, must be that inner movement of God's good Spirit in the heart of man, an inner movement welcomed and acted upon, so that it takes effect in the courage of self-committal, the courageous profession in the name of Christ. No man can really profess His name, no man with any knowledge of what His words mean can say, 'Jesus is the Lord,' but by the Holy Ghost. These old lessons are what we again and again must learn, and relearn, and lay to heart. Faith is necessary, that first, if we would share the Christian's hope and life. What genuineness there is in Thomas Carlyle's protest against the attempts to sustain the fainting courage of men by unreal appeals to Christian language emptied of its meaning! They would have comforted him after his wife's death by the vaguely used phrase, 'In My Father's house are many mansions.' 'Yes,' he said, 'if you were God, you may have had the right to say so, but, if you are man, what do you know more than I, or any other of us?' In very truth Jesus Christ hath brought life and immortality to light; He hath raised what was at best a dim hope of immortality into a certain expectation and secure conviction, so that eternity becomes the recognised scale on which we Christians are to calculate our life, and to estimate what is, and what is not, worth doing. But He hath done this only because as manifested Son of God He revealed with secure knowledge the things of eternity, and because, as Son of Man, the revealer of man's true capacity and

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

destiny, He was Himself raised from the dead to die no more. 'If Christ be not raised, your hope is vain.'

Again, we may be thankful to find one who, like John Stuart Mill, did not share our Christian conviction, recognising that not even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavour so to live as that Christ would approve his life. But we cannot but see that logically such acceptance of our Lord, as the final standard of human action, is only possible if indeed we believe that 'by this Man God will judge the world.' It cannot in fact be too clearly understood that the consolations of Christianity have their root in a faith which, if it knows itself, must know itself to be definite about His Person. We believe that God is Life, not because the evidence of nature or experience is enough to support that peculiarly Christian belief, but because we confess that Jesus Christ is in such true sense the Son of God that His character is the character of God, His love the love of God. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' We believe in the forgiveness of sin, that the Son of Man, not only had, but hath still in His Church, the power on earth to forgive sin; but the security of absolution really depends on the absolving will being the final and absolute will, the absolving sentence the divine sentence. 'Who can forgive sins,' we still say, 'but God alone?' There is no doubt about it. The Christian consolations depend on the Christian faith. Those consolations are not strong enough to bear the rough usage of life, they are not strong enough to sustain us during the strain of experience, till the faith on which they rest is a faith brave and free enough to come out into the light of common profession and common intercourse, to be formulated into simple propositions, to be made the basis of action and policy, as in the simple language of the Creeds of Christendom.

II. Faith is necessary. And again, faith is supernatural. That means 'it is the gift of God,' not the result of the mere action of our own faculties. It is only, in saying this, to say in other words that evidences and proofs never can reach the point of creating faith. Evidences can justify faith, and support it, and show it to be rational: they cannot produce it. Such evidences we have in our generation in quite fresh force and power, for our New Testament dogmas have passed through a critical sifting and analysis of the most trenchant and thorough sort in the fifty years that lie behind us. From such sifting we have learned much about the process through which our New Testament documents took their present shape. We have been obliged to alter, in a certain measure, current opinions about one or two of them, but in all that is material, we feel that this critical investigation has only reassured us in asserting the

COMPLETE SERMON

historical truth of the records on which our Christian faith rests. I may express this in two words: first, by saying that this critical investigation enables us to assert, with better ground of assurance than ever before, that the Christ of our four gospels, the miraculous Christ, the Christ with His absolute divine claim, is the original Christ of history, as those beheld and bore witness to Him who had been educated in closest intercourse with Him. We have better grounds of assurance than ever before that we have in the four gospels no late and vague traditions, but in very truth the Apostles' doctrine. We have better grounds of assurance than ever before that in S. Paul's Epistles we have unmistakable and clear witness to what the first Christians, with unanimity behind their differences, thought about Christ. Consequently, the sifting of recent criticism enables us to call attention, with fresh emphasis, to the trustworthy character of the Apostolic witness. In some ages testimony has been careless, so careless, so clouded with superstitious credulity, as to be practically valueless, but in the Apostles we have men who knew thoroughly the value of testimony and what depended upon it, who bore witness to what they had seen, and in all cases, except the exceptional case of S. Paul, to what they had seen over a prolonged period of years, whose convictions about Christ had been formed in spite of much slowness of heart and even persistent unbelief in their own minds, formed also in the face of Sadducean scepticism and cynicism, and in the full consciousness of what would be said against them, formed into such irresistible strength and unanimity by the seal and impress of irresistible fact that nothing could shake it in the individual or in the body. Such testimony does for us, we may fearlessly say, everything that testimony can do. We can be sure that the Christ of our gospels is the Christ of history and fact. We can let His claim and character as the gospels present them to us make their full impression on our mind. We can place ourselves at His feet, like the Apostles, and hear His word. We shall find ourselves driven to admit that He makes upon us indeed that moral claim which none can make but He who originally created and who rules our souls. We shall find in His miracles again works which express in another sphere exactly the same claim as finds utterance in His language, the same authority of love and judgment. We shall realise how such a character and claim and life lead up naturally to His Resurrection; it was not possible that He should be holden of death. Such an issue, the issue of life, is required for a character such as His. So He will for us, as for the Apostles, be marked out as the 'Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.'

All this evidence can do for us. It can impress and awe us; it

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

can suggest faith and justify it, and make it reasonable, but create it, never. 'No man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.' At the last resort it is by an act of faith, only by an act of faith of our own, that we can set to our seal that God's offer in Christ is true, and this act of faith, this going out of ourselves in loving venture, of surrender, is always a motion which we know, even in the making of it, to have its origin far beyond ourselves. It comes upon us as a movement from above, a movement in us of the Divine Spirit. In making our act of faith we are not, we know, originating but only corresponding, and corresponding to nothing else than God's Spirit. It is by the Spirit of God only that we can recognise the Son, as it is in the Son only that we can recognise the Father.

One word more, and I have done. There are two sorts of faith: there is the faith by which we come to believe, and there is the faith in which we Christians are meant to live. Both are supernatural; both, that is to say, are the work of God in us, though they correspond to different stages of the Holy Spirit's activity, for He works upon men to make them Christians, and He dwells, as in a temple, in the hearts of them who are already Christians; thus, working upon men, He brings them to believe; dwelling within them, He sustains them in that highest sort of faith, habitual and actual, which is the consciousness of sonship. 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' This life of faith, this consciousness of sonship, is meant to be the normal life of Christians, and yet, if even the Eternal Son in our manhood vouchsafed to enter so deep into the trials of the human spirit as to lose the enjoyment of the divine fellowship, the conscious illumination of the Father's presence, as to cry, 'My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?' surely we too must expect trials in our life of faith; how much the more so that in us, in ourselves, we have to deal, not only with the weaknesses which belong to innocence, but with the obscuring of the things of faith which result inevitably from worldliness and indolence and impurity. Yes, depend upon it, we shall not find it always easy, we are not meant to find it easy, to keep up a life of faith, to 'endure as seeing Him who is invisible.' Always we need to remember that, as the creation, so also the sustaining, of the life of faith is a divine gift, and demands on our part a reverent waiting for the gift of the Divine Spirit. When argument, evidence, reasoning, experience, have done all that these human things can do, we shall always, at the last resort, find ourselves again, prostrate simply before the throne of divine grace: 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief'

CANON GORE.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Function of Physical Pain.

The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain. ROMANS viii. 22.



NOTE the universality of pain. Has Christianity anything to say to it?

I. First notice some answers which philosophy has given.

1. That it is minatory, to warn from greater disaster.

But a large portion of it does not possess this quality.

2. That it is a necessary condition to animal existence, like friction in machinery.

But this is simply another way of stating the problem, it gives no answer.

3. Paley's theory, that it is a necessary condition of pleasure, to add piquancy to enjoyment.

The general reply to all these is the fact that we are never ready to rest satisfied with its existence, but always clamour for a cure.

II. Setting all these aside, what can we make of it?

No step can be taken in the way of explanation until divine government is allowed.

Law implies penalty; hence the true instinct which calls the phenomenon 'Pain,' *i.e.* 'Pœna,' *i.e.* 'Penalty.'

1. It is to deter from and punish sin.

The connection recognised in a general way between sin and suffering: seen in the 'vicious classes.'

Moral smart is not sharp enough to be depended upon.

But this will not account for it all.

2. To develop character.

The gentle ministries of compassion.

A painless life would produce a monster.

Contrast the characters of northern and southern races.

The intellect: the busy brains engaged always upon the problem.

The great profession of the physician.

III. Then consider, 1. That so much of it can be seen to be good establishes a probability for the rest.

2. That it is clearly connected with a personal government of the world.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

3. The future which Christianity emphasises: 'What I do, ye know not now,' etc.
S. D. McCONNELL.

The Christian Groaning and Waiting.

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruit of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. ROMANS viii. 23.

THERE are three points here which seem to present themselves to the eye at once. First, the description of the Christian given by the Apostle. Then, his present condition—that he is groaning within himself; and lastly, that which he is waiting for, that which will put an end to his trouble, 'the adoption; to wit, the redemption of the body.'

I. First, then, the description of the Christian given us by S. Paul. He is one who has 'the firstfruits of the Spirit.' It is the plain teaching of the Bible that salvation is something begun upon earth, and to be consummated and perfected hereafter. The germ is implanted in us now. Nourished by the dews of divine grace it increases and grows, but it is not until the kingdom of the future has come that this germ will develop into the full, fair tree, with its wide-spreading branches and its abundant fruitage and its glorious flowers. I know I am telling you nothing new when I tell you that heaven must be begun upon earth, and that we shall be in the future life only the expansion of what we are in this. But I am reminding you of something that is unspeakably important, and all the more so because many persons allow themselves to entertain the vague, undefined notion, that some great moral transformation will pass over them at the time of death which will fit them for the presence of God and for the occupation of eternity. I pray you let us all cast that notion out of our hearts. Let us not trust our salvation to the chapter of accidents. If we are to be saved, it is because we have become in this world partakers of something, some germ of spiritual life, which we shall carry with us when we go hence and are no more seen.

Now, that something is called in this passage 'the firstfruits of the Spirit.' S. Paul frequently speaks in this chapter of the Christian as 'having the Spirit'; as being 'led of the Spirit'; as being 'dwelt in by the Spirit.' And his meaning must be this: that the man who is a Christian in reality as well as in name has so thrown himself open as to admit God the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, into his heart. This, mark you, is not a figure of speech, but a fact. There are more mysteries in those

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

invisible souls of ours than you and I are aware of, and this is one of them, that they are capable of allowing the contact and entrance into themselves of another spiritual being, so that the two shall become mutually interwoven and act and react upon each other. When, then, a man truly believes in Christ, truly accepts Him as his sovereign, truly thrusts out the love of the world, to make room for Him in his heart, truly takes His light yoke and easy burden upon him, then the Spirit of Christ enters into that man, and makes His habitation with him.

Of course, upon such a subject one must not attempt to define too strictly or speak too positively. But this much seems clear, that the Spirit exercises an internal influence upon the man, and like a living fountain of water ever springing up within him, becomes the source, the producing cause of all good thoughts and all holy actions. The man yields himself up ever more and more entirely to this influence. He is led of the Spirit, taught of the Spirit, comforted by the Spirit, warned by the Spirit, the Spirit that dwelleth, a real divine person, a celestial inhabitant, within him.

Now, here you have a distinctive mark of the Christian. He has the 'firstfruits of the Spirit,' that blessed possession which will issue in his completed salvation in the world of the future.

II. Let us turn now, in the second place, to the condition of the Christian, as depicted by the Apostle. 'He groans within himself,' says S. Paul. Groans within himself, what can that mean? Surely, if a man's Christianity is genuine, and he has enough of it, it will make him happy and not miserable. And surely, S. Paul, who was one of the most wholesome-minded men that ever lived, would never be inclined to countenance those unhappy, morbid persons, who go about snuffling and telling us that 'the world is a waste howling wilderness.' No, of course not. And, certainly, if any man has a right to be happy in the world, the Christian has. With his sins forgiven, with the light of his reconciled Father's smile beaming upon him, confident in the love and care which have followed him hitherto, and which will follow him to the end, if the man is not happy it is owing to some defect in himself. It is because he does not open himself to all the divine influences which are pouring in upon him; it is because he does not allow himself to rise to the height of the position in which God's distinguishing mercy has placed him.

But yet the Christian has his troubles, which make him 'groan within himself.' There is an inner conflict within him. He is not perfect yet. Sinful, selfish inclination strives for the mastery and has to be kept down by force. And in proportion to the keenness of his sense of the holiness of God and the strictness of the divine

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

law and the greatness of the love of Christ, will be the keenness of his pain whenever he has allowed himself to slide back into inconsistency or sin. Again, he cannot, if he is a feeling and a thoughtful man, but be troubled with the state of the world, and troubled that he has done, and is doing, and perhaps can do so little to mend it. There are some men who seem to me like persons grubbing for gold or diamonds at the bottom of a pit and utterly heedless of the misery and sorrow that is seething on the surface round the edge of it. Intent upon their own schemes, they have no leisure to give thought or care to this sorrowful and sinful world. It cannot be so with the Christian. He must care for others. He must care for the honour of God. It is a trouble to him, not perhaps so great a trouble as it should be, but still a trouble to see what he cannot but regard as the ruin of souls going on all around him. Realising, as he does, the preciousness of the unseen and eternal, it pains him to see men bartering the glories of their immortality for the baubles and gew-gaws of time, selling Christ for the gold that glitters, or for the wine that sparkles in the cup, or for the smiles of the wanton, or for the windy blast that is blown by the trumpet of earthly fame. 'Rivers of waters,' says the Psalmist, 'run down my eyes because they keep not Thy law.' So, to some extent, it is with every true Christian.

And he, too, conscious of his imperfection, anxious to be done with the strife and the tumult and the battle, longing for the dawning of a better, brighter day, looks forward, as poor Creation does, to the manifestation of the sons of God.

III. This brings us to our third and last subject, the thing which the Christian is waiting for: 'The adoption; to wit, the redemption of the body.' Let us try to understand this. You and I, if we are true believers in Christ, are the sons of God now. 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God.' But there is nothing at present remarkably and transcendently glorious about us. Our bodies are frail and feeble. We are liable to sickness, exposed to death. And when we come to our spiritual life, though it is there it is feeble. We are indeed struggling onwards and upwards, but it is in the midst of much inconsistency and infirmity and sin. No, there is not much that is glorious about us now. Our greatness, if we are to have any, is more in prospect than in present possession. In other words, we are the sons of God; we have the life-blood of our heavenly parentage running in our veins, but the life is not yet manifest; we are now, actually, really, in present possession, sons of God, but we have yet to be exhibited and appear as such by the outbreathing of the life that is within us. 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.'

G. CALTHROP.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Expectation of the Creature.

The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ROMANS vii. 19.

I. S. PAUL regards what is called the creature, by which he means everything that is created, as an expression of God. As we should now-a-days put it, from the molecular forces in the dust out of which meteors and stars have grown, to the dawn of life, and from thence through the whole realm of vegetable and animal life, up to man, all is an expression of that unknown spiritual force behind all things which we call God. In the rest of creation that force is still unself-conscious, but in us it has become to be self-conscious: we can think, can reason, can judge as to right and wrong, our thought, intelligence, reason is an expression, and the highest expression that we can see of God. This may be thought Pantheistic, but is it not also Pauline? So what S. Paul meant in the text was this, that all nature, animate and inanimate, was eagerly waiting for its final development, waiting for the manifestation, the complete appearance, of the sons of God. He sees that evolution, and he sees its goal. This is in brief his philosophy of the world. All nature is some sort of expression of God; man is the highest normal expression; Christ was the perfect expression; the very nature of God so far as could be shown in human limitations, and seen by us, being expressed in Him; and all nature, like some one sentient being, seemed to him to be longing, even groaning, for the complete expression of the highest, when the kingdom of God shall come on earth, and all shall be Christlike. All nature is yearning, he tells us, for the perfect manifestation of the sons of God.

That, I say, seems to be S. Paul's general philosophy of the universe, if I may use so large an expression. It is for students of philosophy—and again I say that I am not one—to tell us how far this great conception did or not anticipate the master thought of Hegel and Green and Caird. I know that it is a philosophy which satisfies me, and moreover that it gives me what seems to be the very essence of Christ's revelation, and to be entirely in harmony with all that I know of the science and the best philosophy of our age. It seems to me to be final and indisputable.

II. I say it is of the very essence of Christ's revelation. For if you put aside the ethical teaching of Christ, which cannot be called a distinctive revelation, however beautiful and profound it is, since so much of it was anticipated by other teachers; and if you ask yourself what was the philosophical centre of His teaching, you will, I think, answer, it is that men have a right to call God their Father; that

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

they are His sons all of them without distinction. Jew or Gentile, Samaritan or republican, saint or sinner ; all alike claim God as their Father ; all are His children ; all bear his likeness ; disfigured, concealed, it may be ; but still His likeness. And therefore it is always possible to rouse men to the sense of this sonship ; to evoke the God in the man ; to regenerate ; to raise from any depths. In His eyes, as it seems to me as I read the gospels, all the poor wandering sheep are God's children, and are loved by the Father with an unspeakable and unceasing love. They are like princes in disguise, they have lost all trace of their noble birth, living in slums instead of a palace, and He comes to tell us what we truly are. The manifestation of the divine in man varies indeed over a wide range : it is more conscious in some than in others ; but it is there in all. Throw this into philosophical language, and what is it but saying that man is the self-conscious and inchoate expression of the divine which is present in an unconscious state, interfused, as Wordsworth says, in all nature. When I think philosophically, I put it thus ; but the way in which it goes to my heart, and affects my conduct, is the thought that we are the sons of God : with some faint likeness to Him never lost, and that, gifted as we are with reason, conscience, aspiration, we can become more like Him, and consciously, of set purpose, co-operate with Him, and work out his will.

III. When you once accept this faith, which harmonises the needs of head and heart, as it seems to me, and live your life in the thought which Christ expressed by saying that you are the child of God, with divine powers in you, with God's likeness stamped on you ; when you believe that you are part of His self-expression in nature, gifted with the marvellous power of conscious co-operation with Him, then I think all else falls into its place.

You will have a true religion, not a morality only. For religion rests on the belief that we have not merely to find out and do what is best at the time ; but on the belief that there really is, and shall be, and must be the perfection at which we aim. The real spring of human effort, the very spring of faith, is the conviction that whatever the appearance may be, we are contending for a really existing right, for a real kingdom of God.

To go back to S. Paul we see that he regards all nature as one vast unity, a great manifestation of God, and that he longs earnestly for the full manifestation of the sons of God. Contemplate the great chain ; down it stretches link by link, from the saintliest and best on earth, through the lowest savages, down to animals and plants, and the formless kinds of life, down to the inorganic and mysterious forces, of the action of which we can form no conception at all ; the unvarying automatic action of gravitation, bridging the space from

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

sun to earth a million times faster than light; the unvarying laws of chemistry. Contemplate this, and then look at man, and what does the sight suggest? Shall we regard man as the cunningest of all nature's clocks, and say 'what a piece of mechanism is man?' Shall we level down, or shall we level up? And here faith and reason, as it seems to me, agree absolutely, but we cannot explain the highest by the lowest, but that we can explain the lowest by the highest; that nature and ourselves are intelligible when we regard all as an expression, still imperfect and inchoate, of God's will and purpose and nature, intelligible in no other way. And then when we look at Christ, when we see in Him an ideal, no mere product of His circumstances, but transcending disciples and followers and His Church by an immeasurable distance, then we see the chain reaching upwards till it is lost in the blaze of the throne of God. We see ourselves linked to Him by a common humanity, and we see Him as the Son of God; and therefore we have to regard even our poor weak selves as the sons of God; and the thought is mighty enough to redeem and restore a world.

Christ sought to establish a society in which this should be the supreme article of their faith. This was the gospel which the disciples were to go into all the world and preach to every creature. It was this faith that did actually inspire and regenerate them, and it is this faith which will inspire and regenerate us, and may yet make a universal religion, the religion of Jesus Christ, the religion of the kingdom of heaven on earth. This is the sublime thought of the Fatherhood of God; it carries with it the brotherhood of man; it carries with it the idea of the Catholic Church; the assembly of those who, filled with this thought, labour for its practical realisation by awaking in the unconscious the sense of their divine possibilities.

To believe in this is to believe in very truth all the articles of the Christian faith in a sense far deeper than is possible to those who do not so grasp the central principle. The eternal life is a corollary to such a faith. The Resurrection of Christ, His continued life, is a necessity. The forgiveness of sins, the getting rid of this slavery to the lower, comes with the expansion of the higher in us: the realisation that we are the sons of God. The atonement is the bringing us back, as the Prodigal Son was brought back, to the love of our Father whom we had lost sight of. The Old Testament is the record of the gradual approximation to this thought of sonship; the New Testament is the tale of Christ's showing to the world what it really was, and how it affected His immediate followers; the history of the Christian Church is the history of how this thought blended with Jewish preconceptions, and Greek metaphysics, and Roman

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

imperialism, and all the myriad motives of men ; the history how this thought, never lost, though often buried, emerges again and again, always to throw fresh life into human development. To believe that we are the sons of God is the one inspiring faith which is powerful enough to mould the coming age, and take it truly a step towards the kingdom of God.

ARCHDEACON WILSON.

God's People Publicly Made Known.

The manifestation of the sons of God. ROMANS viii. 19.

THERE is one grand principle which supports the Christian believer under the anxieties and sorrows to which he is now subject. That principle is the feeling that this world is not his home, but that he is looking forward to his everlasting rest in heaven.

I. 'The persons spoken of.'

They are the 'sons of God.' What a title! Are there any persons to whom this lofty title may be applied? There are, I trust, not a few, and those in all ranks of life among you, and of all ages. Let us examine whether it is so or not. Now there are various titles given to the persons spoken of in this chapter. By examining these titles we shall see whether or not we ourselves are included in the unspeakable blessings here promised.

They are said to be 'in Christ Jesus.' Are we 'in Christ Jesus,' as Noah was in the ark, as the manslayer was in the tower, as the branch is in the vine? They are said to 'walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' They are said to 'mind the things of the Spirit.' They are said to be 'spiritually-minded.' Is this our character? Do we mind the things of the Spirit? Are we spiritually-minded? They are said to be 'in the Spirit,' and 'to have received the first-fruits of the Spirit.' And then it is declared that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are 'the sons of God.' This, you observe, is the wonderful title given to those of you who are true believers. You are 'the sons of God.'

You are the sons and daughters, not of an earthly king, but of the King of Kings, the children of the Highest. But sons of a King though you are, you are, as it were, princes in disguise. The world knew not the King Himself while He was upon earth. It is no marvel, therefore, that the world knows you not. This explains my second topic. You have seen who are the Persons spoken of. Now observe:

II. 'Their present obscurity.'

There are some few real Christians set in the prominent and high

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

places of the earth. Ever and anon there has been a pious king, like Hezekiah; a pious rich man, like Joseph of Arimathea; a pious nobleman, like the eunuch of Queen Candace; a pious prime minister, like Daniel; a pious learned man, like Paul. Still these are the exceptions. As of old, so now also, the sons of God are, for the most part, unknown. They are what David calls 'the Lord's hidden ones.' They go through life without lifting up their voice or making a cry in the streets. There are various reasons for the present obscurity of believers. Sometimes the reason is ·

1. Their position in life.
2. Their brokenness of spirit.
3. Their removal by death.

'Our fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?' Even the most eminent and useful, as well as the rest of the sons of God, must die and leave us. We see their sepulchres. We can go and visit their graves. We can read and profit by their writings. Still the eye that once saw them now sees them no more. Their souls are in Paradise with Jesus, and their bodies are sleeping in the dust. But to us they are no more 'manifest.' To us they are as though they had never been. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, ministers, saints, all are gone, and are no longer seen! Impenetrable shadows surround them, and those shadows will not pass away till the resurrection morning. And then, indeed, will the righteous, in a vast assembled throng, appear with Christ in glory. They will no more be separated by their position in life; or by their brokenness of spirit; or by their removal by death; but all in heaven and all on earth will be one. Then shall, indeed, be the 'manifestation of the sons of God.' Then the dark night of their present obscurity will be gone, and the bright day of their manifestation will have come. This is our third subject:

III. Their future glory.

All believers are even now 'the sons of God.' They are His children by adoption. Now among the Romans of old, adoption was twofold. There was the private adoption in the house. There was the public adoption afterwards in the forum or market-place. The former of these adoptions, the private, every true believer has received already. You received it when the Holy Ghost first brought you to Christ. The second of these adoptions, the public, you will receive in that day when God will gather His elect from the four quarters of the world; when He will restore to every redeemed soul its long-mouldered body; and when He will make the whole man, in body and soul, everlastingly blessed in His presence. That is the period when the body will enjoy the redemption that has long been enjoyed by the soul; and that will be one characteristic of the manifestation.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

We shall be presented 'faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.' This is another feature of the manifestation.

C. CLAYTON.

The Groaning of Creation.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. ROMANS viii. 22, 23.

I. **W**E shall regard the text as bringing before us two facts, the first of which is set forth in the twenty-second verse: that the real Christian looking without himself sees in all around him the traces of the misery and fruit of sin; and the second is set forth in the twenty-third verse: that the real Christian looking within himself is still troubled, although he knows that God has done much for him, he feels how much there is still to do in the work of cleansing and renewing. Verse twenty-second: 'We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.' Verse twenty-third: 'And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' This is, as I understand it, the final and complete emancipation from the thralldom of sin. No doubt we are quite right to be on our guard against a merely sentimental religion, against making too much of sentiment, too much of feeling, as contrasted with sound principle, resulting in sound practice. The Church has suffered as much, perhaps, from the self-deceit, and the assumed or over-strained feeling, as from the self-satisfied orthodoxy, or coldness of the same formal practice, not regulated by the living springs of religion in the heart. But however this may be, there is no true religion without feeling; and the real Christian, whether he looks without or within, must have his feelings deeply stirred when he thinks how much sin prevails around him; how much misery is connected with it; how little he is himself able to cope with it through his own abiding sinfulness.

II. The sense of human sin and misery lies at the root of all earnest Christianity—that sense of sin and misery which is longing to see an end of it, which S. Paul in this Epistle to the Romans sets before us as characteristic of the Christian. This is the only sure source from which we can expect with certainty that efforts of Christian benevolence can spring, and to them we must look if we would see men exerting themselves for Christ's sake, not by fits and starts, irregularly, but everywhere and under all circumstances.

We live in an age when we cannot but hear much said respecting

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

the two dissimilar systems of Christianity, which divide the whole of the religious communities of Europe ; one resting much on authority and outward show, and sacramental and ceremonial usage ; the other appealing to the individual reason and conscience, and rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ has made His people free. We hear much also of the onward progress of materialism—of a system of unbelief founded on material speculation, which threatens to trample down both one form of Christianity and the other ; while there stands hard by the sneering or despairing scepticism which refuses to join any side in such discussions, contented to wait for another world before it makes up its mind ; confessing, that respecting what concerns the things unseen while here in the flesh, it knows nothing, it will believe nothing. Now, at such a time as this, it seems to be the especial office of the ministers of Christ to urge on men's consciences those great simple truths of the gospel about which there can be no mistake. We are sinners judged by our own standard, be it what it may. Go down to the depths of your being, to your heart and conscience. Is there no voice divine speaking within ? If there be, though it should speak but in a whisper, be sure you listen to it. Think of the reality of things now, as men think of them on their deathbeds, and then I feel sure you will agree with David and S. Paul ; you will feel and know that you are sinners ; and this will stir you to help others who are sinners with yourselves, but who are not sinners without hope ; because Christ was born, was tempted, and died, and rose again, and ever lives to make intercession for them and for you.

ARCHBISHOP TAIT.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

The Duty of Mercy.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; give, and it shall be given unto you. S. LUKE vi. 36, 37.



THESE words in S. Luke seem to correspond to the more general maxim in S. Matthew v. 48, 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,' and S. Luke particularises the virtue in which we are to strive to be Godlike, viz., in mercy. As S. Bernard observes, Satan tried to be like God in power, and was cast out from heaven; Adam wished to be like God in knowledge, and was driven from Paradise; our Lord tells us we must be Godlike in mercy.

I. Mercy was the first revelation of God, for creation was an act of mercy, the overflowing of God's love upon His creatures. The Incarnation was an act of mercy, the stooping to take man into God; and the whole revelation of the historic life of Christ was a revelation of works of mercy. If we are to be Christlike, then we must be merciful.

II. The spring of mercy must be the love of God. Not mere goodness which hates to say no, and which may be but sloth; not mere philanthropy, which has man as its end, and may be but self; but a love for God, which cannot but manifest itself in a love for our neighbour. Mercy does not choose only attractive objects. Mercy was what Dives lacked, and so he passed Lazarus by, he was so unattractive, so loathsome; the spirit of mercy is the spirit of Christ, which sees possibilities of good even in the most depraved, which recognises God's image, however much defiled by sin.

III. But in the gospel our attention is called to two special channels of mercy.

1. In the judgment of others. We are apt to lose the force of this passage from the inadequacy of the English translation; three stages there are in the judgment of others: judge not, condemn not, forgive.

2. In almsgiving, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you.'

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

IV. OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

Intercessory Prayer.

Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. I SAMUEL xii. 23.



SAMUEL'S relation was just on the point to change.

He had resigned his judgeship, and was transmitting his supreme power into the hands of Saul. Henceforth he would see the people less, and his direct influence would be smaller. It was a great, and, to him, a very trying situation. But he bore it meekly and bravely, and he fell back restfully on the thought of another relation which could never

be broken—the relation of intercessory prayer; and in the earnestness of his sense of the duty and the love he owed them, he repudiated indignantly the idea that anything could ever sever that tie. He might teach them no longer, and govern them no more, but whatever you may do, ‘God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.’

It is a holy pleasant refuge into which the heart may often run: ‘I can do little else but this. No change, no distance, no external circumstance can ever alter this. I can never cease to pray for you.’

To a Christian this is little less than an instinct. ‘There is one I love on earth, and I have a Father in heaven. How can I not make those two things meet? To that Father I have access at all times. And I have a power given me to prevail with Him. And that one, whom I love, has many wants, and many sorrows, and many sins. With those wants, and those sorrows, and those sins, I cannot now deal personally; but I can do better. I can take him, and all that touches him, for weal or woe, to that Father. And I can engage for Him a better love, and a stronger arm than mine. How could I not carry him to that Father?’ ‘God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for him.’

If you have not that instinct there is something wrong in your state. Your heart must be too darkened or hardened by sin to pray. But if you have it, use it as a voice from heaven, a direct call from God. The instinct itself is an argument that the thing is right, and that the prayer will succeed.

Let me set before you some of the reasons for intercessory prayer, and some of its encouragements.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Why is intercessory prayer a great thing?

1. First, S. Paul lays it down as a positive command, and makes it the primary obligation of every Christian: 'I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men'; and he adds this high reason: 'for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.'

2. Secondly, we are never walking so closely and so exactly in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, as when we are praying for any one. In other things we do, we are copying what Christ did once, or what He did occasionally. In this we are like Him in what He is doing now, and always, and for ever and ever; for 'He ever liveth to make intercession.'

3. Thirdly, we never more effectually benefit ourselves than when we pray for others. I do not mean only that every good action brings back its blessing upon those who do it; but I mean this: the spirit which breathes an intercessory prayer singularly reacts upon our own hearts to do them good.

For example: one day your heart is very poor in prayer. You have no fervour, and you have almost lost the very power of praying. It is astonishing how, if you begin to pray for some other person, the dead impress will revive, and the spirit of prayer will come back.

Or, there is some one towards whom you know that you ought, and you wish, to feel very different from what you do; to forgive more, to love more. Pray for that person; and if only you pray simply enough, and kindly enough, and long enough, you cannot help in the end to love the person you pray for.

Or, you are unhappy, weak in body, not at peace in your mind, sad at heart. Think of some one who is being tried like you, and then bear that person earnestly and affectionately before God in your prayer before God. Remember Job. Specially remember him when your whole soul is fettered and bound. 'The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.'

4. Fourthly, you have no talent of greater usefulness than the talent of intercessory prayer. Every other channel of good is circumscribed, and illness and absence will take their place. But this has no limit. Wherever you are, night and day, under any circumstances, you can do it; and, doing it, you can reach everybody to the end of your whole life, from the highest to the lowest—those otherwise perfectly inaccessible to you, the guiltiest and farthest off from God. You are engaging Omnipotence to do the work, and enlisting in your behalf, and others, the interposition of an infinite love.

Of what other mission may you say as much as that? The whole world your field, and God your arm. What vocation is to be compared with the vocation of intercessory prayer?

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

For who, think you, do the work? The workers or the praying ones? Who were they, the Israelites on the plains, or Moses on the hill, which conquered Amalek? I believe that we shall find, one day, that we made strange mistakes about cause and effect; and that we shall learn to trace results to very different origins than those which we assigned to them here.

The encouragements to intercessory prayer are also, as they occur to my own mind, four.

The first lies in the character of God—that all we bring in are dear to Him—that ‘He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should be saved’; that, after all, Christ is that ‘Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world’; and that it must be a thing very dear to God when one of His children brings another of His children and lays that child at their common Father’s feet.

The second great encouragement is in the fact that there is never a commandment in which there is not rolled up a promise. We have seen that it is commanded, ‘Pray for one another’; we safely argue that it would never have been commanded if it were not in God’s mind to grant the thing which we are told to ask.

Thirdly, the general promise of prayer is exceedingly large. Whatsoever is of faith is sure. The success of that prayer is covenanted. ‘Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.’

And fourthly, almost all our Lord’s miracles were done in answer to intercessory prayer. Friends and relations brought their sick and suffering ones and laid them at His feet; and there is not one instance of failure. Not one who was sent away unworthy or unhealed. The works of mercy appear to have been, almost in every case, the simple triumph of intercession. ‘Jesus is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.’

The encouragements, then, to intercessory prayer are very large, only just short of an absolute promise. They do stop short of an absolute promise. We must be jealous for the faithfulness of God. If there were covenant to intercessory prayer, such as there is to our prayers for ourselves, when we ask for our own forgiveness, or our own peace, or any gift of the Spirit, the result would be sure. No person who is really prayed for could ever perish, or continue in sin, or in misery. God would be unfaithful if it were so.

But persons prayed for do perish. Therefore, we must guard the faithfulness of God at any cost; and I say there is no positive promise to intercessory prayer.

But short of the actual undertaking of God, there is everything to give hope, and all but certainty, when we ask for any one of those things which we know are after the mind of God to give to His children; and which Christ has purchased with His own Blood.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In these days, when it is so frequently said, 'Pray for me,' every one must be careful not to undertake more than they can do. Do not say too lightly to any one, 'Yes, I will.' There are some for whom we should pray almost, or quite, daily. There are others who should have a place in our prayers regularly, but occasionally. And others, to whom it is sufficient, and as much as we can do, if we say, 'I will pray for you once. The next time I go into my room to pray, I will pray for you.' That you will remember. That you can do.

Still, it is a good rule, whenever your thoughts are led especially to any person, always to wind up the thought with a prayer for that person; and never to hear of a special trial, or need of any one, without turning it into a petition. And, I may add, never to hear of any good thing befalling any one without an alleluia. Remember that intercessory prayer, and intercessory praise (you may make it ejaculatory, as short as you will), offered in any place, at any time, is as much an act of the heart as any of your other prayers.

To some it is a help to keep a list of those whom they will specially remember before God; and some set apart a particular season, or occasion, for that exercise of love. It is a habit which mingles very well and very sweetly with Holy Communion.

We cannot estimate too highly this privilege of mutual prayer; nor be too thankful for the kind arrangement which has placed it within every man's power, and made it the province of every man.

For, before it, all distance ceases, and separation becomes a word unknown. We all meet, at any moment we choose, at the same mercy-seat. For the power to help, to comfort, and even to save another is not diminished, but rather increased, by absence.

I can feel my love, and show my love, and express my love, and use my love as effectively—though a mountain and an ocean stand between—as though I stood at my brother's side.

For, indeed, the shortest road to any place is around the throne of God. I can send a thought up to the Almighty, and He can convey that thought far better than the thought I send in an instant to the farthest corner of the earth.

And a very dear, sacred, and true thing it is, when a good gift comes, or a happy feeling flashes in the mind, to think, 'This is the answer to some one's prayers who is at this moment, somewhere or other, pleading for me. My friend's prayer, my minister's prayer, my people's prayer, move the blessing which is now winging its way into my soul.'

But all through Jesus in His love.

Nor does the comfort of the truth bound itself here, even within the limits of this earth.

I can never doubt that those who prayed for me, when they were

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

here, go on to pray for me there, in their quiet resting-places. I will not ask them to do it, for that would be to give them an attribute of Deity, ubiquity; but I believe it. They do not love me less. Why should they not, out of their own free hearts, pray for me as they used?

And who knows but that they engage the prayers of other saints besides themselves for me, and for those I love? And so, just as the natural body is strung together by its thousands of secret nerves, the whole mystical body of Christ, in earth and heaven, is knit into one, by those threads of prayer springing from the throne, and going back into ten thousand hearts, to weave themselves again around the throne.

When we think of all that this prayer can do—to bind and comfort us, and glorify God—well may each of us enter into the indignant sense of guilt and shame which burnt in the patriarch's heart, that he so nobly rejected the idea of prayerless affection, or any communion in life which was silent before God. 'As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.'

JAMES VAUGHAN.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Waywardness and Wisdom.

But wisdom is justified of all her children. S. LUKE vii. 35.

I. E have here a contrast presented. There is on the one side the perverseness, the waywardness, of man; his disposition to cavil at all God's appointments, especially at those which concern religion, revelation, and the soul; his readiness to complain of each as inappropriate, inadequate, inconclusive, or unreasonable; his proneness to say to each, If it had been thus, and not thus, it would have been more satisfactory, more impressive, or more convincing; I should have felt it so, and God, if He had sought my good, would have thus arranged it. On the other side, there is the sympathy of wisdom with wisdom; the kindred and affinity which exists between the voice of God in His Word and the voice of God in the heart and conscience of His creatures; the certainty that what

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

God speaks, and the way in which He speaks, the persons by whom and the circumstances amidst which He speaks, will commend itself to those who are wise indeed, wise in the humility of a true self-knowledge, wise in the genuine insight of an illumination from above.

II. The waywardness which is here expressly rebuked was exhibited in the manner in which the Jews of that time received the mission of the Baptist and the mission of the Saviour. They settled with themselves how God ought to speak, and judged accordingly with regard to that which He did speak. When He sent them a reprover, in the befitting garb of austerity and of isolation, they attributed to a diabolical agency those manifestations of the character of the message which he conveyed. When He sent them One who was to bring God's love into everything, to raise what was low, and to sanctify what was common in human life by coming Himself into the midst of it to show, not by precept only, but by example, what it might be made; then they said that it was self-indulgence which prompted the intermixture, and that one who really came from God would never associate on equal terms with the earthly and the sinful. Thus, whatever God did was just wrong. If He spoke severely, it was unloving and morose; if He spoke gently, it was a compromise with evil.

III. There are those who judge in much the same manner now of God and His revelations. If He says what we know, or think we know, already, it is superfluous; we do not want a revelation to teach us that. If He says one word beyond what nature or reason might have taught us it is irrational, the word must be brought to the bar of a pre-existing faculty within, and whatever that faculty does not instantly ratify must be condemned as a fancy or an imposture. One of the plain declarations of the Bible is pronounced to be inconsistent with probability, another with some human authority, another with the divine justice, another with Christian charity; one is harsh, one is sweeping, one would lead to mischief, one is extravagant, one is unattainable: all these things must be cast aside as not suiting our pre-conceptions of God's character or of God's truth. And, as it is with the contents of God's Revelation, so is it also with the proofs and evidences of its divine origin. One person does not like miracles, another cannot accept prophecy, one says it is unworthy of God to suspend His own laws, another it is unworthy of God to dignify human persons by the prediction of their names and deeds, a third finds nothing so convincing to himself as what he calls the internal evidence of truth, the testimony of his own conscience telling him of the goodness of the word spoken, or the comfort of his own heart in the exhibition there made of the holiness and the love of God. And

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

what each one does not like in the way of evidence, he directly casts aside as valueless, and perhaps goes on to demonstrate to be hollow and delusive. Such is man's treatment of God's revelation. And if there be something in all this which is presumptuous and shocking, something which offends a sound judgment as irreverent towards God and unthankful for means of conviction largely and variously vouchsafed, might we not apply also to this subject the language now before us, and say that there is also in such reasonings something unworthy and puerile, something which may remind us of the little children sitting in the market-place, whom nothing can please, who are dissatisfied with every endeavour to charm them from their waywardness and ill-temper? What would they have? What can God say to them which they will not find some excuse for quarrelling with? How can He support His disclosures by such proofs as they will accept as satisfactory? We shall find, I fear, in too many cases, that the real dislike is to revelation, that the real repugnance is to the idea of being taught anything from above, that the ground of the refusal of this and that as an item of truth or as a mode of demonstration is in fact an overweening estimate of the power and sufficiency of man, insomuch that, whether the heavenly music be gay or grave, it will alike in either case be unresponded to, whether the messenger be the Baptist, he will be said to have a devil, or the Saviour, He will be accused of companionship with the sinful.

Meanwhile, here also, wisdom is justified by her children. They whose hearts are softened by a true self-knowledge and enlightened by a real communion with God, they who are wise in that wisdom of which the condition is humility and the beginning the fear of the Lord, will see wisdom in that which to the caviller is folly, will recognise a divine harmony where all is discord to the self-confident, and own an abundance of resource worthy of the All-wise and the All-merciful in that variety of evidence which affords to different minds, and perhaps to different ages of the world, their appropriate as well as conclusive reason for believing. The very things which others calumniate are to them indications of wisdom. They see how the message of the Baptist and the habits of the Baptist, the office of the Saviour and the life of the Saviour, are severally harmonious and of a piece. They see how exactly God adapts His means to His end, and His messenger to His message. Where they do not see this they yet trust. Not blindly, nor in the dark, for they know Him whom they have believed, and judge of that which they discern not by that which they have already known. Thus they live, thus would they die. They cannot part with what they have till they have found something better. They cannot cavil at God's word till they have discovered something more wise, more durable, and more supporting. When

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

the question is put to them, 'Will ye also go away?' their answer is, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.'

DEAN VAUGHAN.

In Christ.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

ROMANS viii. 1.

I. IT is the impression with some that we may escape divine condemnation by so multiplying our good deeds as that they shall exceed in amount and value our sins and shortcomings. God, it is supposed, keeps an account of all that we think or speak or do, and strikes a balance at last, assigning our portion according to the preponderance of good over evil or of evil over good. According to this view, we may set off one thing against another, a rigorous observance of Lent, for instance, against a life of worldliness and dissipation for the rest of the year; long prayers or listening to long sermons against the outpourings of a backbiting and slanderous tongue, a gift to a charity against overreaching in business, an act of kindness against an act of impurity, and we may hope in this way to obtain an ultimate acquittal at the judgment-seat. And not an uncommon form of the theory is to be found when a man persuades himself that he will soon reform his life, and that, for the sake of that reformation, God will be good enough to overlook all that has been amiss in the past.

But, when we come to think of it, no sensible person, no person who really and earnestly looks into the matter, can possibly be deceived by such theories as these. I speak to business men here; men shrewd, practical, clear-headed, not easily taken in. Will any number of bad threepenny pieces rise to the value of a sovereign? Of course not. How, then, can our deeds, which, unless they are done from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by the help of His Holy Spirit, will not pass current in the courts of the upper sanctuary, how can they, base coin as they are, have any efficacy whatever in recommending us to God, and in obtaining for us a footing in the divine favour? Once more: if I have incurred a debt and payment is demanded of me, shall I be able to release myself from liability by engaging to pay ready-money to my creditor for the future? 'Of course not,' is everybody's answer. Apply the answer to spiritual things. Suppose that I could do such a thing as to engage to live a faultless, sinless life, like that of Jesus Christ, for the rest of my days (the thing is impossible, of course, but let us suppose it), I should even then do no

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

more than it was my duty to do; and how is the past debt which I have incurred, the debt of sin, the debt of innumerable violations of the law of God, to be cancelled and done away with? Even on the extreme supposition which I have just made, the debt remains exactly where it was before.

II. But, passing away from man's ideas, let us consider God's reply to the inquiry about forgiveness. 'There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.'

Now, we may picture to ourselves the Saviour in the midst of His Church, as He stood in old Galilean days amongst the thousands, feeding them with a handful of food, and we may imagine Him distributing to each of His disciples according to his need, reaching out forgiveness, peace, strength, knowledge, in fact, all the conceivable blessings and privileges of the spiritual life. And the picture, no doubt, would represent, with a certain amount of accuracy, the facts of the case. But it would not be all that is required. Rather are we led to conceive of each true disciple as being united, made one with his Master, by a living faith, a faith imparted to and sustained in him by God the Holy Ghost. To help us in the conception let us turn for a moment to Bible imagery. We are, all of us, connected with Adam, the root of our race, and to that connection we owe our liability to sin, and our exposure to the doom of death. In Adam all die. But, precisely in the same way (it is a real and not a figurative way), we, if we are true disciples, are connected with Jesus Christ, the second and last Adam, and draw from Him the blessing of eternal life. Again, in the tree and its branches, the branch, being part of the tree, and, only on such condition, becoming capable of bearing fruit; in the intimate union between the Head and the members of the body, those members being under the guidance and direction of the Head, and deriving life and the power of motion from it, in these things, not to mention others which will occur to you, we have a lively and graphic representation of the union of the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit with the God-Man Himself, a union so close and intimate that Christ is said to abide in us, and we are said to abide in Him, He to be one with us and we to be one with Him.

In this way we escape condemnation; not by overlaying our bad deeds by good ones, however well-meant and earnest, not by casting ourselves vaguely on God's supposed incapacity of punishing, but simply by accepting, in the power of the Spirit, Christ's gracious and loving offer of identification with Himself. In Christ we are safe, and only in Christ.

G. CALTHROP.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Causes of Unbelief.

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. PSALMS XXV. 14.

IT is often supposed and often asserted that modern science is the parent of modern unbelief. The spread of new ideas, the flood of fresh light pouring in from all quarters upon the human mind, the new acquaintance with the world and its past history and present condition, the recognition of the place really occupied by man and this tiny earth in the universe to which thought can put no limits, whether in time or in space—these things have been regarded by some minds as making the facts of Christianity incredible. In an age like ours, men will tell you it is impossible any longer to believe in it. So long as mankind were in ignorance as to the real truth about nature and life it was not difficult to accept Christianity as a unique revelation from God. But now we are ignorant no longer. We know too much to believe, and, as in the presence of science theology now stands discredited and abashed, it is to science that our homage is due.

I. It is not our present purpose to discuss any imaginary disagreement between science and religion, nor even to point out that pure Christianity has foundations which science has neither the right nor the power to approach at all. What is far more necessary in these days to insist upon, is the fact that unbelief, the great mass of modern scepticism, is not due to the progress of science, or to any other intellectual cause. Its cause must be looked for elsewhere. It is, indeed, I think, very questionable whether there is more unbelief amongst us now than there was in the last century. Then there were large numbers of professing Christians who were not genuine enough to openly discard the faith which they did not really hold, and which they did not exhibit in their lives. Now, the greater freedom of expression, and the general fashion of the time, permits and even encourages such men to throw off their allegiance to Christianity. Unbelief, therefore, makes a more formidable show outwardly than it used to do, just because it now expresses itself where formerly it was silent. And if silence were truly responsible for this separation of the sincere from the insincere, then it is to science that our thanks are due, due for that sceptical movement which, so far from deploring, we should regard as a great gain, a great gain because it has thus separated the true from the false, the genuine from the unreal. But science, as we have just now said, is not responsible. Some men, no doubt, owing to her teaching wrongly or partially applied, have been shaken from a footing which can never have been very secure, and very many, repeating the catchwords of thoughtful men, and cover-

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

ing themselves with the thin varnish of an intellectuality which they do not really possess, have become persuaded that they are too cultured, too large-minded, to hold to the gospel of Christ.

But in the great majority of these and other cases, what is the true, it may be often the unsuspected, cause of unbelief? It will be found, we are absolutely confident of it, not in the intellect, but in the character. It is a moral cause. Far down at the roots of free thought and modern doubt is the dark and terrible fact which we call sin, the waywardness, the selfishness, the weakness of will which so mar the divinity of man. These know that the Cross of Christ will make a definite claim upon their lives. They know that it will require in them simplicity and self-denial, a battle with their evil passions, a renunciation of something which they like, and the pursuit of others which do not yet attract them; to many a cherished ambition and accustomed pleasure they see the warning finger and the outstretched hand. Therefore it is that they will not follow Him. Therefore they believe to be true that which they wish to be true; they believe that to be false which they wish to be false, and therefore it must often happen that when a man complaining of loss of faith, and asking whether it is the progress of science, or the study of history, or the critical spirit of the age, or any other purely intellectual cause which has robbed him of his belief, we are bound to turn round to him and say, 'Look into your own heart, and see whether the answer is not there.'

II. 'The secret of the Lord,' says the Psalmist, 'is with them that fear Him.' From those who do not fear Him, he implies, from those who do not care to possess a certain character, and to lead a certain life, the secret of the Lord is hidden. They cannot understand religion because they have no desire to live religiously. And this thought, that unbelief has far more generally a moral than an intellectual cause, was often taught to those of His own day by Christ Himself. Very definitely He warned them that if they would know the doctrine about God, it could only be done by doing His will.

This, too, has been the truth seen and the lesson taught by many a great teacher of modern times. 'Love your Bible,' says Ruskin, 'and your doubts will cease.' 'I am quite sure,' Keble went so far as to aver, 'that in every unbeliever there is something morally wrong.' And, at any rate, our own experience will confirm the remark of a working man, that 'wicked and impure lives keep far more people away from Christ than infidelity.' Yes, in many cases it is indeed the fact that the root of scepticism is sin.

How true this may be we have seen in others. And we know in ourselves when the face of God and the reality of His love become dark unto us, and the Cross of Christ fades into a misty shadow, and

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

when we have suffered a familiar sin, an old weakness, to gain a stronger and a stronger hold upon us, do we not feel that to that and nothing else is due the growing distaste for religion, the deepening cloud of doubt, that there is a spot that may spread and touch the whole of our spiritual life, that if we are ceasing to understand 'the secret of the Lord,' it is because we are ceasing to fear and to love Him.

III. And even so as we look about us in the world, this is the very picture which life presents to us in others. The gradual loss of beauty and strength of character, and the gradual disappearance of fame, how often are those, too, to be seen hand in hand, unbelief no doubt reacting upon the character from whose lessening nobility it has sprung. Look at the multitude of those who are living without faith in Christ. Are they, as a rule, passionate lovers of truth? Do they burn with an emotion of goodness? are they hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Are they, I ask, are these the men to whom we should naturally go for strength in weakness, for advice in difficulty, for consolation in sorrow? Are these the men to whom we should naturally trust the training of our children, and the education of the people? These may be, and often have been, found great and good without being professing Christians. Is it so then with these? The vast majority of modern unbelievers, are they, in a word, strong and high in character and in life? Are they among the men whose very look haunts us with the dream of unattained perfection? We know that it is not so with them. Faith has a root in character, and therefore in belief. And, as we watch them sitting among books and pictures which have satisfied their souls, or plunging into the mad scramble for wealth, for position, or going on in their weary round of so-called pleasure, or cheating themselves with the hollow glitter of society, we see in them yet another solemn witness to the truth of the Psalmist's words, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.'

Such facts as these, inviting all men to scrutinise very narrowly their own hearts, will be found to have a twofold message for the doubter. They will have the same advice which Coleridge once offered in answer to an inquiry whether Christianity were true. 'Try it,' was his only reply. Try it, love your Bible, and your doubts will cease. Be good and you are already on the way to Jesus Christ. Study His life, live as in His presence, work by His Spirit, recognise in yourself the atonement of His Cross, and in exact proportion as you do these things, religious doubt will trouble you no more. But never imagine that you will find freedom from doubt by recourse to logic or to criticism. Never imagine that the truths of spiritual life will be revealed to those who seek them only by argument or

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

discussion, or to those who live in the atmosphere of sensuality or worldliness.

And to the believer this message comes, Live up to your living, and the peace and progress of the Christian life will assuredly be yours. As your character deepens you will see how your faith will grow wider and deeper too, and in your own life not as the fruit of a convincing criticism, but through the power of noble thought, blossoming into noble deeds, you will understand and realise more and more clearly this promise of the Master, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

S. A. ALEXANDER.

Joyful through Hope.

We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? ROMANS viii. 24.

HOPE deals solely with the future and the delightful.

I. With the future. This appears at once from the language of the text, 'Hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?'

I need not illustrate this from common life. I need not stay to prove how hope is literally life in the future, even here; I need hardly linger on the power that this hope has had in creating progress, in making existence bearable, in winning the hard-fought battle of life in many a field of love and war, of science and of merchandise. Ever since Jacob toiled on patiently through his seven years of hope, and survived his bitter disappointment to toil and hope seven years more for the wife he loved, and yet seven years again for the fortune he deserved, hope has ever been the enchantress of the future that has led energy up the steep and rugged present, never allowing the downward, backward look, lest difficulties, even after they are past, should distrust or paralyse, but bids it ever look upward, onward, forward to the prize.

Hope looks not at the past, nor at the present, hope looks onward; being a child of faith, with faith's eye she sees the unseen, and gives us strength to endure and to labour. Hope rests in future blessedness not yet realised; faith gives certainty to those unseen objects of hope; but it does not give certainty to us, so with hope added we look on and wait. For, as the Apostle continues, 'if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' There is therefore in the hopeful Christian a continual reaching onward to that which is before, and at present unseen; there is no such thing as that false assurance which is in reality either presumption or indolence, which says I have faith, and all is done, I am quite assured

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

that I can never fall away. I am saved, I am safe. Nay, but we are saved by hope. We are in a state of salvation by faith, but the completeness of that salvation is matter of hope, and the very act of saying all is done and there is nothing more to do or hope for, is like the waking utterance of a dream, when the slothful wayfarer, who knows that there is a home and a welcome waiting for him, declares that that knowledge is all he needs, lies down forthwith to sleep, in his dream continues his illusion, and crying out, I have it, I am fed, I am resting, I am home, wakes up to find himself starving and desolate, and the sun sinking over the distant moorland where his unaccomplished journey lies.

II. But hope differs from faith not only in dealing exclusively with the future, but also in dealing with the bright things of the future. The bright things of the future in the very midst of the gloomy things of the present.

We have an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. From the storm-tossed vessel of the Church here below, in through the veil, through the unseen into the waveless harbour and the unyielding anchorage of heaven our hope ascends. All here is shifting, noisy, uncertain, all behind is perilous, nay, fatal; all there is firm, unchanging, all there is peace for evermore. Our Forerunner has entered in. He gives the security; He guarantees the end. He draws us by the cords of a man; the morning wakens, the shadows pass away, the mists lift up, 'tis Jesus standing on the shore. Jesus, who Himself hoped unto the end, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God. And that Cross, if we are bearing that Cross now, it shall prove the anchor to which our hope is fixed. And as we see Him there, as we gaze upon Him, our hope beams brighter and stronger and truer; no longer having no hope, no longer without God in the world, we are by anticipation in heaven already, and in reality are every day preparing for it, and drawing nearer to it.

G. C. HARRIS.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Suffering. SHOULD the Empress determine to banish me, let her
ROMANS viii. 18. banish me; 'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.' If she will cast me into the sea, let her cast me into the sea; I will remember Jonah. If she will throw me into a burning fiery furnace, the three children were there before me. If she will throw me to the wild beasts, I will remember that Daniel was in the

ILLUSTRATIONS

den of lions. If she will condemn me to be stoned, I shall be an associate of Stephen the Proto-martyr. If she will have me beheaded, the Baptist has submitted to the same punishment. If she will take away my substance, 'naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return to it.'

Suffering. It seems appointed 'taht much of the highest instruction ROMANS viii. 18. should come to us (even in the Bible) through the sufferings and struggles of individual men.

Suffering. THE people of Verona, when they saw Dante in the ROMANS viii. 18. streets, used to say, 'See, there is the man that was in hell!' Ah, yes, he had been in hell—in hell enough, in long severe sorrow and struggle, as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. Comedies that come out divine, are not accomplished otherwise. Thought, true labour of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of pain? Born as out of the black whirlwind; true effort, in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself: that is thought. In all ways we are 'to become perfect through suffering.'

How to Suffer. THE Port-Royalist exclaimed, 'Let us labour and suffer: ROMANS viii. 18. we have all eternity to rest in.' One who, fighting with wild beasts, was a spectacle to angels and men, reckoned 'that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'

Mercy. God pours not the oil of His mercy save into a broken S. LUKE vi. 36. vessel.

Merciful. 'God, be merciful to me a sinner,' is the leading idea of S. LUKE vi. 36. the inscriptions on thousands of gravestones in the stately cathedral and the village churchyard, and bears silent testimony to the deepest convictions of mankind.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	1 S. PETER III. 8-15.
GOSPEL,	S. LUKE V. 1-11.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	1 SAMUEL XV. TO VER. 24.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	1 SAMUEL XII. OR 1 SAMUEL XVII.
SECOND LESSON,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Word and the Preacher.

The people pressed upon Him to hear the Word of God. S. LUKE V. I.



F the author of these words — the great Gentile Evangelist—it has been said that to his pages, rather than to any others in the Bible, we turn in order to realise the attractiveness of Christ, and to understand by what spell He draws all men unto Him. For undoubtedly it is in the gospel which comes to us from the pen of the beloved ‘Physician’ that we have the most moving portrait of the Divine Healer, who ‘Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.’ His has well been termed ‘the Gospel of Forgiveness,’ so full is it of gracious invitations, and reassuring incidents, and comfortable words. Ah, how many a penitent one has found pardon and peace, how many a sinner has come to himself and exchanged despair for hope over the things which we find in S. Luke alone!—over the return

COMPLETE SERMON

of the Prodigal Son; over the parables of the Lost Sheep, and the Good Samaritan, and the Pharisee and the Publican; over the story of the woman 'who was a sinner' welcomed and forgiven because of her great love; over the repentant thief accepted in his last agony by the One who 'is able and willing to save, even to the uttermost, all that come unto God by Him.'

We are apt, are we not, to think of our Lord's ministry as a career full of discouragement and of apparent failure? 'He came unto His own and His own received Him not'; and yet the text is one of those passages in the gospel which prove to us that the message which He bore by its attraction—and that quite apart from the marvels which drew wondering crowds in pursuit of His words, which He spake as never man spake—brought an eager multitude ever and anon to hang upon His lips. If there were times when He was followed by a gross, greedy multitude, seeking only a repetition of miraculous bounty and not at all moved by hunger and thirst for righteousness, there were certain other times when the weary and the heavy laden gathered round Him to drink in those words which were, and ever must be, 'spirit and life,' and then went away filled 'with joy and peace in believing' to proclaim, 'We have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.' So great, indeed, at times, was the pressure that, in order to avoid it, and yet to secure a hearing by the greatest number, our Lord, as the sequel of the text shows, would embark upon the lake, and, thrusting out the little craft He had entered, addressed the multitude who lined the shore. The fishing-boat was the pulpit from which not a few of the most remarkable and suggestive utterances of Christ were delivered.

Some here will, no doubt, remember the passage in Dean Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* in which he pictures the scene which must then have presented itself, and shows us how almost every detail in the Galilean parables may be traced by actual observation; how, for example, the great Parable of the Sower may be verified still by the traveller when, from the bosom of the lake, the undulating cornfield is to be seen sloping to the water's edge, with the path running through it hard with the tramp of horse and mule and human feet; when the eye rests upon 'the good,' the rich soil, which marks off that region from the bare hills that elsewhere descend into the lake, and makes the most luxurious of harvests; upon the 'stony ground' of the hillside protruding here and there through the corn as elsewhere through the grass; and upon the dense bushes of 'thorns' springing up in the midst of the waving corn; how again in the countless birds that haunt the shore we may still see 'the birds of the air' which came and devoured the seed by the wayside, or which took

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

refuge in the spread branches of the mustard-tree, and how the relics of the great fisheries of Gennesaret recall the image of the 'net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind.' Now, in the text we are told how the toilers in that region were drawn to Him who could so wondrously interpret the still life of Nature and the busy life of man, under the magic touch of whose spirit scenes and objects that had hitherto taught nothing became instinct with meaning and eloquent of divine truth. It was no brilliant lecturer, no fascinating improviser that gathered that eager throng. Imperfectly as He may have been understood, those who came within range of the words of Jesus felt that He was a teacher of quite another order from any to whom they had listened; and He Himself had disclosed the secret of that authority of which all were conscious, that mysterious influence before which all who heard felt compelled to bow: 'He that sent Me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him.' Is not that pressure on the part of the Galilean crowd something more to you and me than an historical fact? Do we not read of it with other feelings than those with which, for example, we read of the popularity of some ancient philosopher whose school was thronged by admiring disciples? We know that there have been intellectual leaders of men on whose utterance entranced listeners have hung, courting with unwearied delight new stimulus of faculty, and consciously lifted to higher mental stature by that inspiring contact with genius; but here we have a phenomenon of another order—the speaker who is run after is more than a philosopher, and those who pursue Him are seeking a supply of deeper need than philosophy has ever yet ministered to. It was nothing less than the Word of God that men crowded to hear from the lips of Christ, and the craving which drew them after Him then was one which has never passed away; it still works mightily in human hearts; now, as of old, through many an avenue of approach men are pressing upon Him for satisfaction of that self-same craving, and the time is assuredly coming, in spite of all signs which may seem to point the other way, when the pressure shall be intenser still—nay, when the words once whispered in hatred and alarm shall be the words of literal truth: 'Behold! the world is gone after Him.' For Christ speaks to us the very mind of God; He is Himself the personification of that mind; He is the Incarnate Word, the living discourse in which the great Father of all addresses His children; and His words descend to us and appeal to us with the commentary of a life that is felt to be divine. Sometimes a great personality has arisen who has stirred his own generation and told upon after generations as well; but the secret of his influence is lost—it has perished with him; we can only guess at it; we can only discern the

COMPLETE SERMON

dim outline of a great influence looming faintly through the mist of ages, and we catch but a few broken echoes of the once commanding voice. Sometimes, again, there have been illustrious teachers whose words have survived and passed on as a priceless heritage from age to age, while of the teachers themselves we know almost nothing. How little we know of the two greatest poets that ever enchanted the world, though their immortal verse is in the hands of all! Scarce a tradition survives to show us how Homer and Shakespeare became what they were, or to enable us to read their works by the light of their lives. But in Jesus Christ both the personality and the words have been brought out into clearest and fullest illumination; the joint influence of the two which was felt so irresistibly wherever He moved on earth is felt to-day, and while men were compelled to own that never man spake as He spake, in that life which He led they were unable to detect a flaw. If the living fragrance still lingers in those utterances, and the dew of perpetual youth is upon them, it is because they interpret to our souls the life which is, and ever must be, 'the light of men.' And thus the text may remind us of the indestructible privilege which we share, that, like the crowds that gathered on the mountain side or listened with breathless interest on the shore, we can come, we can press close to the Divine Master, and hear Him for ourselves as He speaks the words of God.

I. The text may also serve to suggest to us thoughts of a more general kind. It opens up the whole question of religious appeal, and especially it may set us thinking about the whole meaning and province of Christian preaching. What is there, we may ask, in common between the eagerness with which men pressed of old upon Christ Himself and that with which they will flock to listen to the teacher who preaches about Christ? Is it the same Spirit which is moving them? Is it for the same wants that they are seeking supply? I believe that it is. Doubtless the interval is vast indeed between the teaching of the Divine Master and that of the worthiest individual who bears His commission, who delivers His message, who expounds His words. We have our treasure in earthen vessels. Our ignorance may distort it, our unworthiness may hinder its acceptance; and yet what men seek to gather even from the weak and imperfect utterances of the human teacher is what they sought after when they crowded round Jesus—it is the Word of God. From Him that word flowed in unsullied purity; no moral infirmity marred its delivery, no spiritual defect impaired its power, and listening to Him men heard the very mind of God unadulterated by the faintest touch of error or of sin.

II. But another thought which occurs to us, as we turn from the first Christian teaching to our own, is this, that preaching in the original

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

sense of the word is a thing now unknown in Christian lands. To preach, in the language of the New Testament, means to proclaim or to announce, and it is applied to the proclaiming of Christ as a Saviour, especially to those who never before heard of Him. When S. Paul says that 'it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe,' his words mean something very different from what they convey to modern ears. He is contrasting there the divine expedient of a simple proclamation of the redeeming work of Christ with the wisdom of the world, the philosophy which had utterly failed to raise man out of his sin and to bring him to God. In those words which we often hear in their setting to immortal music he described himself and the first preachers of the faith as 'ambassadors' for Christ, envoys who bore the first overtures of the great King, and invite all to listen to the glad news of His salvation. But the modern sermon is a new means of grace; it is one that has grown up in the Church of Christ in answer to the instinctive demands of believers; it is a satisfaction of the need which every Christian man, intent as he is bound to be on the imitation of Christ, must feel of having the chords continually touched which link divine truth to our common life. For more than a generation preaching has been notoriously on the increase throughout Christendom, and the demand for sermons has been steadily growing. The people have truly 'pressed upon the ministers of the gospel to hear the Word of God.' It is a great mistake to imagine that the clergy have created this want, or that they have conspired to multiply sermons, as some would say, at the expense of a long-suffering laity. It is the lay people who call for sermons; and the clergy with revived zeal have set themselves to meet the demand. But let it not be forgotten that sermons and kindred forms of religious instruction have become so prominent a feature of the Church's work simply because Christian men and women whose spiritual interest have been awakened ask for them; and, in spite of the gibes and complaints which it is the fashion to circulate, in spite of charges of dullness, dryness, sameness, emptiness, which fastidious hearers bring, we parochial clergy know full well that, in the large majority of congregations, the omission of the sermon would not be accepted as a gain. But let us not hesitate to say that preaching must, for the most part, be all that it is sometimes censured for being: it must be, in one sense, commonplace; it must be a repetition of what has been said a thousand times before. The preacher may exercise—as, indeed, he is bound to exercise—all the skill he can acquire in giving freshness to his great message and in diversifying the application of truth. He may bring out all his treasure, 'things new and old'; he may endeavour to confront, one after another, the intellectual difficulties, the moral perils, the social

COMPLETE SERMON

problems of his time; but, for all that, there is of necessity a fixed range within which his work lies, there is one theme which must be paramount, there is one aim which must guide him—he has to preach Christ in all His fulness, and to bring the ‘mind of Christ’ to bear to consecrate the present, and to keep supreme the interests of the soul, and of the unseen world to which it belongs and for which it has to prepare.

III. Perhaps you have sometimes wondered what it is that gives to preaching its attraction still in a day when there are so many competing influences at work which tend to discredit and invalidate it; you have wondered what it can be that will bring devout and patient thousands to the feet even of a commonplace or illiterate preacher. Is it not because you forget that the hearer himself must always contribute to the effect of a sermon? When there is any great sentiment by which all hearers are possessed, and to which the preacher directly appeals—for example the sense of a great national danger or deliverance—you know that this sentiment is quite as great a factor in the result produced as the words which stir them; but let us remember that on a smaller and more private scale the same phenomenon is always at work among ordinary congregations and at ordinary times. Every hearer has a history of his own. He comes to the house of God, bringing with him his trials, his perplexities, his reasons for joy, sorrow, or fear, his sins and his struggles with sin. In such a congregation as assembles Sunday after Sunday within the walls of London churches, gathered from every quarter and perpetually changing, it can seldom happen that he who occupies the pulpit can know anything of the spiritual state and mental attitude of one listener before him. He must feel, as Canon Kingsley so strikingly put it from this place, ‘like one who stands upon the brink of some broad-flowing stream and calls to the multitudes that drift past him.’ Even in ministering habitually to those whom he knows best, how rarely can the preacher be said to know the immediate needs or real posture of heart and mind of any! But this, remember, it is that makes all the difference in the effect of his words. Which of you can look back over his church-going experience without recognising this all-important fact? I doubt not there are many who can say that the sermons which really help them and in which they have seemed, with deepest certainty, to hear the very ‘Word of God’ have not been those which a mere critic would pronounce most remarkable, they have not been those which have displayed most literary skill or theological learning, but they have been those which were heard at critical times in the personal history, those which met just the sorrow or the doubt or the fear which at that time held possession of them. The preacher may be saying something which is lost upon half his

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

audience and accepted as obvious by the rest, and yet one heart there may be before him the soil of which God has prepared to receive as life-giving truth what to others is mere conventional truism. That heart may have been softened by trial or humiliated by failure; earthly props and refuges may have been suddenly taken away; remorse for sin may be gnawing at it, or thought and inquiry anxiously pursued may have led it to the very point at which unawares the living voice intervenes; and it is at such a secret crisis as every preacher gets to discover that the old familiar testimony to the grace of God may be so timed as to come home with a directness and a power that are felt to be divine. No wonder if those who have gone through such an experience believe it possible, even through the weak and faltering utterances of man, to hear the very Word of God.

IV. And, once more, that pressure to hear the Word of God of which we read in the text may well remind us who preach and you who hear of our respective duties. We are often invited to extend the scope of preachings, and if not actually to secularise the pulpit, to administer to that love of change and novelty which is so rife in this restless age. Sermons, it is sometimes said, ought to embrace a far wider range of topics, to be more varied and more entertaining. But, it is no part of our commission to tickle the ears of our fellow-sinners; we are not set apart and ordained as ministers of culture to deliver amusing lectures on the questions of the hour; we are ordained to minister to perishing souls; from this place we speak to those who are met together not for mental recreation, but as immortal beings exercised by the deepest of all human experience—to those who know what it is to be tempted, to stumble, and to fall because they are in darkness and want the light of life; and when he remembers this the gravity of his task may well overawe the Christian teacher who is charged to administer on any scale to the souls of men. ‘Here,’ we may well say, whatever our audience, ‘here are the old universal needs, and must they not be met with the same universal helps? How dare I withhold these? How can I yield to the temptation to know man’s heart after the flesh, or offer anything in place of one thing needful?’ The great essentials of our physical life are few in number; yet men tire not of them. The light of the sun, the air and water, without which we must droop and die, weary not by their sameness; they are ever fresh and welcome because they are used for every day’s existence, and worked up into all the varying products of human energy and will. And so we cannot forsake the old, old story; we preach, and we dare not but preach, the old, old truths which awaken and cherish divine life in the soul. Ignorant as we may be of the special needs of any, we have to assume of each that he has come to press upon Christ—that is, to get nearer, if it

OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

may be, to that great light which illumines all duty and interprets all experience. It is for us so to speak, God helping us, that you who hear may go away blessed with deeper hope and trust, with clearer vision of duty and firmer resolve to perform it, with heartier love to God and good-will towards your fellow-men; and if this be your function and your soul's desire, then we cannot expatiate very much, for all our message must centre round Him who is the one inspiration and pattern of living — Christ the Incarnate Word of God, Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ at the right hand on high, the sacrifice for sin, the hope of glory, the consecrator of suffering, the adviser of conscience, the arbiter of action; Christ ever present here, Christ the ever-living Mediator, Christ the Judge hereafter of quick and dead. All other ends that preaching may answer are merged and lost in this one transcendent aim. It is to Him, in all our weakness and insufficiency, we are set apart to lead you and to help you so to abide in Him that when He shall appear you may have confidence, 'and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.'

CANON DUCKWORTH.

II. OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

A Consecrated Thought.

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. 1 S. PETER iii. 15.



IN that striking lesson that has been read to us for this evening's service—in that splendid appeal that the old king of Israel gave to the son who was to be the heir of his father's glory and of his father's reign, there was one great contingency upon which all the success and all the splendour of that promised reign were to turn, and that contingency was his treatment of God. In that second lesson that has been read to us to-night, in which our divine Redeemer gives us those precious pearls of thought which we have strung together, age after age, to comfort the labouring Church of God, there is one underlying truth upon which all depends, and that underlying truth is, again, our treatment of God. And in the words that I have read to you for the text, the Apostle S. Peter puts that forth in the tersest and plainest way. He is teaching people who

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

were themselves labouring under harassing difficulties. He is talking to men and women who had to learn Christian action in the midst of a state of society that opposed that action. The special difficulties of those to whom S. Peter wrote were difficulties that belonged to their own time. They lived amidst a heathen population; they were subject to a state of society where, from time to time, there were ever bursting forth those fitful expressions of violent persecution that tested the mettle of the Christian soul; and, consequently, in that condition of the populations to whom the Apostle wrote, there appeared to be plenty of excuses why they should not remain firm and faithful to their duty. S. Peter admits of none. He speaks of the special acts that belong to the ordinary obligations of their ordinary life. He takes every minute detail of daily duty, and he drives it home with a determination and persistence that speaks to them as if all that went on around them was not exceptional, but simply smooth. He admits no excuse, from the difficulties that were around them, for forgetting the intimate claims of duty. No such excuse was admitted then: none such may be admitted now.

I. The age we live in is an age of advance; but it is a superficial age. Knowledge surely spreads wide, but knowledge hardly goes deep. Men once could brood over truth hour after hour, day after day, year after year. You and I cannot do that now. We have to learn it through our literature. We have to gather it from a moment snatched here and there from the rush and the roar. We have to sit up late if we would learn. We have to end our days prematurely if we would know. The age in which we live is so superficial that we ourselves, with the best intentions, must each of us share in the superficiality of the age. And what is the result? All the thoughts that come to you of sin and of God are superficial. Sin! You look at moral evil, and you only measure how accidental and inconvenient it is to yourself. God! You think of Him never as the Highest, but bring Him down to the bar of your own judging, asking Him to stand before you, not for what He has said, but for what He ought to say. You choose what your Creator should do, and lay down the law to Him as though He were a criminal—treat Him on equal terms, and if He will not come to terms with you, then, with the air of a well-bred man of society, bow Him out and tell Him to be gone. It is no exaggerated picture of the age that you and I are living in. Materialistic, superficial, it is therefore restless, and we are burdened with its restlessness. Change upon change—ever seeking variety, something new here and there must be brought to us—unscrupulous criticism—careless opinion—anything for the moment to catch the ear or to catch the eye. From restlessness there comes fretfulness;

OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

from fretfulness the reaction of despondency ; from despondency, to a thousand lives, the desperate darkness of despair. And so I meet young men who come to me and say, as I talk to them of God, 'In this restless age, in this surge and sway and swell of ever changing opinion, what have I to believe? What am I to do but to fall in with the sway and the swell of the age I live in? Living in it, I must drink its spirit. I am bound to bow to the spirit of the age.' Yes, you and I are children of the nineteenth century, and thank God for it; but as we are children of the nineteenth century, we must drink in the spirit of the age. We are, therefore, in danger from the materialistic age that comes to us. We are in danger, also, from its shallowness and restlessness. We are in danger of a false idea of sin and of God and of ourselves. We have difficulties—difficulties as great or greater than those of the old Christians. 'How shall I answer them—how meet them—how?' ask you who are in earnest to-night, if one thought or earnest prayer has sprung up, out of the list of evil, to meet the case, towards the ear of the living God.

There is one answer to be given—one answer in this age. In such an age it seems to me needful to again and again reiterate that it is not what we do or what we learn—that it is not our activity which will tell on the world around us. It is simply what we are; and if that be true, oh, then, recollect the greatness, the grandeur, the truth, the splendour, the glory, the beauty of your life are conditioned by this. They depend on your falling in with the true conditions that are before you. They depend upon your treatment of God. 'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.' That is the answer. Will you with me, to-night, for a few moments more, examine and measure its meaning. 'Sanctify the Lord God.'

The great answer to be given to the age is this, the sanctification, in the heart of the creature, of the living God. 'The living God!' Oh, when I say that name, and make it ring through the arches of this old cathedral, there seem to come echoing back, from the past and from the present, the cries, 'What? and Where?' 'Who is He?' 'What is He?' 'Where is He to be found?' As they asked in the first age they ask in this age, 'Where—where shall I find Him?' The old French Voltairean asked it, and he sneered away the answer. A workman in London a year or two ago asked it of me in a garret where he worked, and turned and said, as I spoke to him of God, that divines were so apologising for their God that he preferred the theory of Voltaire. Augustine asked it long ago. He went out to sea; he went out to the sky. Looking over the wild waves, he cried, 'Are you my God?' Looking up to the deep blue sky, he cried, 'Are you my God?' Looking to the stars that gleamed in

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

that sky he asked the question; and the answer that rang to him from the three was, 'Above us! Above us!' Oh, mark the difference between him and the workman, the difference between that old French sceptic and the Christian father. The one sneered away the answer, the other had begun to seek.

II. Do you ask me what I mean by sanctifying the Lord God? Then I answer first of all, by seeking to know, if you do not know. Let us go a step further, if I explain the answer clearly. Seek: 'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.'

III. You have the consecrated thought of God. Well, go back to the beginning of your existence. Go back to the first days in which you lived—when first you began to be conscious of anything. You were conscious that you came into a world which you did not make, and you were conscious that you yourself were not made by yourself; and whatever after-arguments you have used—however you have philosophised—however overwise you have been, you are conscious or a living inner consciousness that above you there was a Creator to whom you owed your existence. Act like the creature. Stand as a creature should stand. Lying in the hand of your Creator, act in a creaturely spirit. What is that? It means the government of the life by truth, or, in Christian words, it means humility; and when you act creaturely, and when you recollect always your Creator and are humble, you are sanctifying the Lord God.

Or this explains it more clearly. You realise your existence, but you realise something more. You realise that you have a Father—a Father, perhaps, of whom you knew little when you were a child; but as you grew older He directed your steps. You were conscious that there was one above you to whom you owed obedience—one whom you could trust above your earthly father. And when you rose from that thought you went up at once to manhood, and you said, 'Oh, not Creator only! Oh, not the one that formed me; but a name that is dearer than "Creator"—"Our Father which is in heaven." I know a Father's love.' You know something beyond. Your father carried you back to the years before you. There was another who stood by his side and taught you. You were laid upon your mother's knee. She gazed upon you with eyes that taught you a lesson which the cold world has never envied you; and as you learned that lesson, then, indeed, you began to realise immortality, to recognise a sympathetic tenderness for Him who was above you. Or, perhaps you learned without the plain teaching of the Church of God. You learned the love of God in Christ. Perhaps you learned it by knowing none of this. Perhaps I speak to those who never knew a father's care—who never knew a mother's love.

OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

But if you did not, then, at least, you may remember that there is one above who fills the place. Do you know the thought in you of a living God, of the Creator in whose hand I have to lie, of the Father who loves me and longs for me, of the Father whose love is manifested in the face of Jesus—a love of sympathetic tenderness, of manly because of divine regard?

For one moment I would remind you that there is a further step than simply consecrating that thought—the thought of God. You do not act, when you sanctify the Lord God, only under the power of a consecrated thought: you act under the power of a solemn fear. Yes, do not start when I say it after I have spoken of the loving God. You act under the power of a solemn fear, if you are to meet the difficulties of life with this precept that the Apostle gives you. God and you are alone: you stand face to face with Him. In another few minutes this crowd will melt away as if it had been a dream. I shall remember that I have spoken to you whom I have not known here except in Christ. But shall I be alone? Shall you? Oh, no! Face to face with God—looking straight to Him—I, such as I am, you such as you are. Wherever we go, there He is, and in a real sense we are with Him, with a memory laden with sin, with a will, perhaps, bent in weakness, with a mind and intelligence that would have employed it in vilifying or denying its Creator. Whatever sins we have—sins which we have called light because, alas, they are so common—whatever they are, we stand face to face when we are alone with our Creator, and the moment comes when we wake up to the thought. If you know what it is to be afraid to sin against God, think of it in your rooms and do not be afraid or ashamed of that feeling. Wherever you are—in the drawing-room, in the parlour, in the church, in the mart, in the theatre, or in the street, do not be ashamed to say, ‘I am afraid to do this and sin against my God.’ That fear of God—that solemn fear—is holy: it is sanctifying the Lord God.

IV. I will not weary you, but one point more. This sanctification is to be under the power of a consecrated thought. It is to be under the power of a solemn fear. Shall I stop there? It is to be under the power of a sublime devotion. That is possible since Calvary. That is possible since the Redeemer lived and died. Listen to the voice which says that man has ever lived to wake up at last to the measure of the stature of the fulness of the splendour of the life and death of Christ, and if you do, I defy you, if you have the heart of a man or woman—it may be with restless emotion—it may be in the quietness of a calm nature—it may be an energetic endeavour—it may be in the quiet circle of home, but I defy you not to offer at the feet of that magnificent, that glorious life of Jesus, the homage, the

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

devotion, the adoration that comes from the Christian when he faces the Man of men. And, to give Him that devotion—to concentrate the will and the affections, the memory, the powers of understanding upon one object, to make that one object the object of life, to refuse to deny one word that He has said, to determine to witness to every syllable that He has spoken, to witness for Him not by word, but by imitation, to witness for Him not by imitation only, but by the divine impress, by an ardent affection—to do that to Jesus our Redeemer is to sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Will it meet the materialistic age? Will it meet the restlessness of your time? Will it make you brave instead of cowardly? Will it make you pure instead of lustful? Will it make you determined instead of weak? Will it make you unworldly instead of worldly? It will, it will by the power of the divine impress. Sanctify in your heart the living God.

CANON KNOX LITTLE.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Faith Triumphant in Failure.

Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down the net. S. LUKE v. 5.

I.  HE terms success and failure have a large range in human life. Some men are born, we say, to succeed. There are certain qualities which we feel to have a direct bearing upon the realisation of objects, a clear conception of the thing aimed at, and a resolute look towards it; a just calculation of distances, and a wise allowance for impediments; a concentration of thought upon means, and a perpetual recollection of ends; amidst and above all, an immovable purpose, and an indefatigable perseverance; these are qualities, or powers, call them which we will, from the possession of which, in any particular instance, we confidently prognosticate success, and the absence of which we deem a certain prophecy of failure in the race of life viewed only with reference to the interests of this world. And yet even in this matter we are but imperfect judges, fallible prophets. There are failures, even with all these gifts. Perhaps they are successes, it is just possible, without any of

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

them. Nothing that man possesses can guarantee results. After all, promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west: God putteth down one, and setteth up another. Circumstances which man controls not, changes which he cannot foresee, and chances which he cannot regulate, have a wide operation, wider perhaps than ought else, and under their influence it is seen again and again that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; failure comes where success was certain, success where every one foresaw failure.

Happy are they, and they are sometimes to be found, who are able to comfort themselves under the consciousness of earthly failure by the sense of a higher and a better success. If a man has found heaven, he may bear to have lost earth. But is it not true that failure has place also in this higher work? Are there no spiritual senses in which the words of the text are true? Is there no such thing as a toiling all the night and taking nothing, in the matters of that world which is of the soul and of eternity?

II. The history of the Church of Christ is full of answers to that question. What long dark nights has it to toil through as a body! Have there not been whole periods in which its real work seemed to be going back rather than forward? periods at the end of which the condition and prospects of the gospel must have appeared even worse than at the beginning? And, on the whole, has not this been the true account of the cause of Christ on earth during the eighteen centuries of its warfare, that it has been, more often than not, apparently stationary, making no visible progress, taking no strides certainly towards universal empire, just holding its own by the patient labours of its faithful few, but scarcely seeing one new indication of the approach of the promised day when the kingdoms of the world shall have really become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ? And have not the great advances of the gospel, when they have come, been irregularly and fitfully bestowed? now and then a whole country opened at once to the inroad of the truth, and then again a generation or two passing without one event which could possibly be called a victory won for Christ? These things have been, and we scarcely know how much of them we ought to ascribe to the order of God's providence, and how much to the indolence and faithlessness of man. But of this we are sure, that the long toil of the night, however little rewarded, was essential to the marvellous success of the morning; as essential (we cannot say more so) as the faithful letting out of the nets when morning came, in obedience to the special call of Christ. The attitude of the true Church on earth has ever been characterised by the brief words selected as the topic of this sermon, Faith triumphant in failure.

III. And how shall we say the case stands now—stands for us?

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Are we living in a night or in a morning? Are we of this generation toiling through long hours and taking nothing, or are we rather living in one of those glad and encouraging moments, at which the risen Lord stands at daybreak on the shore of our sea, and says, 'Children, have ye any meat?' and when we answer, 'No,' goes on to direct us by His own authoritative and loving voice, 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.' It is not easy to answer that question. It is not for us to seek to answer it while we are yet among the toiling. But it is very important for us not to be deceived; deceived with that sort of deception which mistakes seeming for reality, and counts means instead of weighing results. Nothing is so opposite to faith as vanity. It is far better to be labouring in the blackest night than to fancy ourselves gathering with Christ when we are indeed scattering without Him.

I hope that it is not thus with us. I hope that there is much, in the Church of this day, of that quiet, steady faithful plodding, to which the promise is sure, 'In due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not.' This, in every age, is the real strength of the Church. It is given to few persons, and at rare intervals, to have magnificent triumphs. S. Paul himself wrote, 'Thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ,' wrote in the very same epistle of affliction, of anguish, of many tears, of a sentence of death felt in himself, of a restlessness of spirit in anxiety for others, which forced him even to turn aside from a door opened to him of the Lord. The real work of the Church, I would say it once again, is done, in every age, by those who are as willing, if so it be, to toil all the night and take nothing, as they are, at their Master's call, to let out the net for an abundant draught. We think it a great thing, and no one ought to despise it, to have originated some great enterprise of good, some new way of winning souls, some mission, perhaps, to a land hitherto uncared for, or some novel mode of proclaiming the Word of God at home. And it is right to try every way; we are far too fainthearted, and far too unenterprising, and far too uninventive, in this one field alone; the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, and it is dishonourable to our faith and zeal that in the highest and grandest of all works, we should be contented to go on in that drowsy and torpid spirit which in matters of business, of science, or of research, would be regarded by all as ruinous and disgraceful. But yet, be we well assured that the condition of success in heavenly things is still, as it ever has been, not ingenuity, but devotion; not hurry, but patience; not self-confidence or presumption, but quiet toil, earnest prayer, and invincible faith. All can, by God's grace, labour through the night, and watch for the morning: all cannot, upon earth, see that morning break, or hear the

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

joyful summons to let out their nets for one last, one crowning success.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

Powers and Signs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake. S. LUKE v. 6.

I. 'THIS incident,' you say, 'was a miracle, a startling event; a break in the ordinary laws of the universe. Some one was in that ship who could do what had never been done before.' I do not think that was Simon Peter's feeling, if he did what S. Luke says he did. 'He fell at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' He feels that the Person who has caused that net to be filled with the fishes is not one who is there for the first time. He is his judge, his lawgiver; one who knows what is in him; one before whom he trembles. The power which had enabled him in other days to fulfil his craft, who had made his craft successful, is there. He stands revealed to him. The sense of a Divine Presence which was not of that moment, but of all moments, is awakened in the heart of the poor Galilean. He who has been speaking the word of God out of the ship, He who has been bearing witness of a Kingdom of God that is near them all, He who has been calling them to repent because that kingdom is at hand, He has given this sign and proof of His dominion. He rules the lake, but oh, more wonderful power! He rules the man who has been plying his trade on the lake. That man is face to face with the Lord. And then is heard the sentence so reviving, and yet so awful, 'Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.' 'I am that Lord whom thou takest Me to be. I have been with thee in thy common work. I am going to send thee forth on a higher work. Thou art to declare to men that gracious kingdom over their business, over their bodies, over their spirits, which I have awakened thee, by this token, to confess.'

II. In this instance the evangelist justifies his own nomenclature. He proves that it is far simpler, far more significant, far more distinct, far more comprehensive, than that which we have substituted for it. The fisherman who would have merely stared at a prodigy, who would have derived from it a transitory reverence for a certain human person, is awed, humbled, raised to another level by this indication of a divine oversight of his work and of him. It becomes an education for every fisherman, for every craftsman of every kind, in after days. It converts every failure and every success in his ordinary business into a sign which he may turn to his profit, and to the

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

strengthening of his faith. It becomes an evidence of the gospel indeed, an evidence that it is from Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

F. D. MAURICE.

The Breaking of the Net.

And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake. S. LUKE v. 6.

IT is very helpful in times of difficulty and distress to be able to look back and see how plainly our Lord foretold just such difficulties, and it is one of the peculiarities of Christ's revelation, distinguishing it from all other pretended revelations, that it is so transparently honest. Our Lord so frankly shows the dark side as well as the bright; and calls every man to count the cost before putting his hand to the plough. And this is so, not only in regard to the spiritual life of the individual, but also in regard to the life and growth of the Church. A striking instance of the latter in the words of my text.

I. The miraculous draught of fishes, which forms the Gospel for to-day, is a prophecy of the work of the Church in this world, as the second miracle, so similar and yet so different, recorded in the last chapter of S. John's Gospel, is a prophecy of the state of the Church in the world to come.

The two miracles are, in fact, in contrast in almost every particular.

1. Here, Christ is on the moving waters; there, He is on the firm shore.

2. Here, the net gathers all sorts; there, only great fish.

3. Here the fish are gathered into the ship; there, on to the shore.

4. Here, they are a great multitude; there, an exact number—one hundred and fifty and three.

5. Here, the net brake; there, it is not broken.

6. Here, they are called to be fishers of men: there, to sit down and feast with Christ.

II. Take but one point, 'And their net brake.' The Church here does not realise our ideal, but having its human element it has its blemishes; there it will be without spot or blemish (Eph. v. 27).

1. Schisms and heresies here to vex and distract us.

2. The Church, like the ark, is for all, good and bad, wheat and tares, clean and unclean, sick and whole, like the inn (*πανδοχείον*, S. Luke x. 34). The good a sanctifying influence to the bad, but it spoils the appearance of the Church.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

3. In our days, when there is so much difference of opinion, so much self-will, so much schism, so much heresy, it is a comfort to remember it was all foreseen and foretold by Christ, all part of the great struggle, all really subserving His purpose.

We need patient trust in time of trial, the net must break sometimes on account of the multitude it contains, and some will go out from us, but the elect will at last be safely drawn to the shore.

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

A Brave 'Nevertheless.'

Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down the net. S. LUKE v. 5.

I. I CANNOT better begin the subject than by quoting a few words of comment from a thoughtful preacher. 'Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down the net.' 'If you look into S. Peter's words,' says Dr. Vaughan, 'you will find in them two predominant feelings. One is that of weariness: "We have toiled all the night; must we begin again?" The other is discouragement: "Must we, after failing all these hours, most favourable for fishing, now start again in the full glare of the noontide sun? Nevertheless"—here is the correction of the two feelings—"nevertheless, if Thou biddest me, there is that in Thy voice which constrains my obedience, and, notwithstanding weariness and notwithstanding discouragement, nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." S. Peter's reply, then, teaches us that the word nevertheless, like its great sonorous synonym, notwithstanding, has in it two things, a though and a yet. "This or that is against it, yet it shall be done." In the particular instance weariness was against it, and discouragement was against it, but there was a constraining something for it. That something was Christ's word, and that settled the question of doing it or not doing it. It may be said,' he continues, 'that life, as a whole, is a great nevertheless, and that each act of life is a little nevertheless; and we may say further that a noble life is characterised by a preponderance of the yet in it, and that a poor life is characterised by a preponderance of the though. The poor life says, "I have toiled all the night, and nothing has come of it; I will give it up." The noble life says, "True, I have toiled all these days, all these years, and I seem to myself to be a complete and utter failure; but Jesus Christ says, Let down the net; and at His word, and simply because of His word, I will do it."'

Such is the wise and beautiful comment of Dr. Vaughan, and the

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

word 'nevertheless' thus illustrated contains a sermon in itself. But I must endeavour further to impress the meaning of the text that it may come to us, not only as a thought, but as a principle of life and action. 'Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.' Do not many of us feel this to be sadly true of our individual lives and characters? How much we might have done. How noble our characters might have been. What poor, shrivelled, unsatisfactory things they are. Only think of the golden, the unbounded possibilities of childhood and of youth. What small advantage we took of them. We are but stupid changelings of ourselves, mere wrecks and ghosts of what God designed us to be. It is true of us, as the preacher says, 'childhood and youth are vanity,' and that, as the Arab proverb says, 'the remembrance of youth is a sigh.' All that varying amount of time and youthful vigour was once before us, an Eldorado rich in unimaginable gold. How did we waste those golden hours! How did we snatch from those richly laden years, not the diadem they offered us but only their withering grass and fading flowers, or even, it may be, the fruit which, as our conscience and all experience of the world warned us, was Dead Sea fruit, full of dust and bitterness; and the Sibyls of thought burned the priceless books which they had offered us in vision and departed silent away to weep.

II. However low we sink we must never cease the effort to struggle up. That is a lesson supremely necessary, but it is another only of the many aspects in which this text might be regarded, which is also full of encouragement for all of us. If it should awaken the despondent, it should also inspire the toiling. We think far too much, every one of us, of our little work. We forget that God is patient because He is eternal. All true work which we do is precious to God, not in so far as it is successful, for that does not depend upon us, but in so far as it is true. We have nothing to do with its results. The efforts are ours, the results belong to God. Could anything have been more disastrously forlorn than the work of S. Paul or more expressive than the result of it, when, deserted by all his converts, forgotten by all them of Asia, and none so poor as not to be ashamed of his religion, he was led out to his lonely death? No doubt if he had not seen beyond it all he would have looked back on his life as mere hallucination, as the French sceptic thinks he did. But we know that he wrote in his dungeon and almost in his last words, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown,' not 'a crown of glory' as you so often put it, but something much better, 'henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me in that day.'

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

business to consider himself the object of God's care in daily occurrences, it is not the king on his throne, nor the minister in his parish, nor the warrior in his campaign, who will obtain clearer proof that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro to show Himself strong on behalf of His people. In the help vouchsafed for ordinary duties, in the strength imparted under ordinary trials, in the quieting of petty anxieties, in the removing of slight obstacles, in the bestowment of every-day mercies—there is an evidence which is only to be observed and treasured up in order to the grand work of conviction, that God will never leave and never forsake those who rest upon Him as their Guardian.

II. Let us now pass on to a different but not less profitable contemplation. We have shown you how strong was the faith of David. It is true, that finally he went with no arms, and no weapons but a stone and a sling: he went, that is, with none of those powers and appliances which seem required, whether for his own defence or for the defeat of Goliath. But, then it is just as true, that he did not determine to go thus unequipped to the field until he had done his best to ascertain that it was not God's will that he should wear a warrior's arms. There seems no reason to suppose that David tried on Saul's armour merely out of compliance with Saul's wish: on the contrary, it appears to have been his intention to have used his armour, and the intention was only given up because, on trial, the armour proved an incumbrance. We may be certain, that all along David felt himself moved by God to undertake the championship of Israel, that he knew it was from a divine impulse that he longed to accept the Philistine's challenge. It is very observable, that though he must have known himself actuated from above, an appointed instrument for the achieving a great deliverance for his countrymen, he proceeds with the utmost caution—as it were step by step—not thinking that means might be neglected because he looked for miracle, but feeling his way like one who was in doubt, and who might not put aside human aids till clearly bidden by his God. You might have thought, that circumstanced as he was, he would have said, 'I cannot wield the sword, or put on the coat of mail; it is God who is leading me to the battle, and He will not work through carnal instrumentality'; and ultimately he did say this, but not at the first; not till he had dressed himself in Saul's panoply, and ascertained that he would be hindered, and not helped, by the attire. There was thus a cautiousness, and an absence of the least approach towards presumption, which, considering how he was moved of God, can hardly obtain too much of your admiration. I do not know in the whole Bible a more remarkable proof as to what is human duty, even in the clearest case of divine interference. If ever man might

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

have ventured to say means might be neglected, the result is ordained, and will be brought round without any of the common instrumentality, David might have been warranted in refusing the armour without trying it on. But this is just what David did not do: he proceeded on the principle that no expectation of a miracle should make us slack in the employment of means; but that so long as means are within reach, we are bound to employ them, though it may not be through their use that God will finally work.

And can you fail to see how David thus became a great example to ourselves? I know not in what precise way God may design to effect the conversion of any one in this assembly, or to give any one victory over some great spiritual adversary; but I know thoroughly what is the business of every one of you, if you look to be converted, or hope to be made victor. There are appointed means through which God is ordinarily pleased to bring round such results: and the readiest mode of frustrating the results is, to assume or take for granted, that means may be neglected. These means are prayer, the study of the Bible, and the ordinances of public worship. That you can show me that the Goliath is often finally slain by stones taken out of the brook, and not by any of the more massive weapons, is nothing against our argument; for our argument is, that, though slain at last by the pebble, the slayer has commonly first put on the armour; in short, that no man has a right to have recourse to the stone and the sling until he have first made trial of the coat of mail and the sword. We are quite prepared for the occasionally finding a man who has been regular in his attendance on the public preaching of the gospel, honestly desirous of hearing what might be carried home with power to his heart, but on whom sermon after sermon seems wasted; so that nothing has been delivered that exactly fitted his case, or equipped him for moral warfare. We are quite prepared, we say, for occasionally finding, that a casual remark in conversation, a text quoted in his hearing, or a passing observation while engaged in his ordinary occupation, will effect what the public ministrations have failed to effect—penetrate the heart, and overthrow the strongholds of pride and unbelief: and here Goliath falls before the pebble, and not before the armour of the thoroughly equipped warrior. But, nevertheless, the man of whom we speak, had recourse to the armoury before he had recourse to the brook; and probably had he refused to appeal to the armoury, that penetrating stone would never have been drawn from the brook; at all events, no man can have a right to be looking for miracle who is not diligent in the employment of means: man is to be trying on the armour, though God may at last use the pebble.

H. MELVILL.

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

The Function of Children.

(Children's Service.)

And it came to pass when the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand ; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him. I SAMUEL xvi. 23.

I. **M**OST of you little ones think, I suppose, that you came into the world to be merry, to romp and play, to please and enjoy yourself ; and that all the world was made for you ; and that everybody in it is bound to do what you would like them to do. I suppose you think so because I see a good many children running about in the world as if the whole world belonged to them, who claim everything they want as if they had a right to it, who even cry for it if they think they can get it on easier terms, and who think themselves very much injured and aggrieved if everybody is not ready to attend to them when they speak, and to give them what they ask for, and to play with them the instant they want to play.

But if you may live to please and enjoy yourselves, why may not I, why may not your fathers and mothers, your brothers and sisters, and indeed everybody else that you know ? We have as good a right to live our life, and to take our own ways, as you have. And if we did, what a pretty world it would be for you ! You can hardly conceive anything more dreadful than a world in which no one would attend to you, no one would love you, or teach you, or play with you, or care what became of you.

You see, then, that you have made a great mistake if you think you came into the world only to please and enjoy yourself. For if everybody did that, as they have quite as good a right to do it as you have, you would be the most miserable little wretches under the sun. Every one would be too busy, in caring for himself, to care for you : and what could be more miserable than an uncared-for child ?

II. Now that you are not uncared for, you know. You know that a great deal of love is lavished upon you, and much patient tender care. You have found out that, not your father and mother and kinsfolk only, but most grown men and women look kindly on you, and are ready to do what they can to please and amuse you. You know that it is so : but do you know why it is so ?

I will tell you one reason. It is not because you are such prodigies of beauty and goodness, so clever, so bright, so amiable, that nobody can look at you without loving and admiring you. Strange as it may sound to you, it is mainly because you are children that

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

people love you, and like to have you about them, and take pleasure in your pleasure. For as life goes on our hearts are apt to grow dull and sad and selfish. It is hard work to earn a living. It is still harder work to live the kind of life which we approve and desire. We have much to do, and much to bear. And the courage and hopefulness with which we set out in life die down within us and lose their first lustre. Then God sends us children; and we learn to live for them, rather than for ourselves; to hope for them if we can no longer cherish bright hopes for ourselves; to be cheerful that we may promote their cheerfulness; to take thought and pains that we may make their lives brighter and happier than our own have been. Generation after generation, men are saved from selfishness, and worldliness, and melancholy, by the children born unto them. And so they love the children God sends them, and live for them, and work for them, and scheme and hope for them, and give God thanks for them.

This, then, is the function of children, the main use they are of, the purpose they serve and are intended to serve: they renew the youth of the world. They bring courage, cheerfulness, hope, love, to hearts that are growing weary and sad, or that might grow weary and sad and selfish but for them.

And I do not know where we could find a better illustration of this function than in the story of which my text forms part. God intends you children, each one of you, to do for your parents and friends what David did for Saul.

III. If you would only say to yourselves: 'It is my part, it is my duty, to make my little corner of the world as bright, as cheerful as I can, and I will try to do it,' even this would be a great gain, as well as a great help, to you, and to us. But, perhaps, you would like to get some more definite teaching than this, like to learn a little more exactly in what way, or ways, you may discharge this high function of yours. And David's story suggests, at least three ways in which you may do it, at each of which we will just look before I close.

1. David did his work very thoroughly, although it was very lowly work for him to do. His father, Jesse, was the chief man, and judge, of the village of Bethlehem. His brothers, most of whom seem to have been a good deal older than he was, were men of some consideration, great tall fellows, very quick with their hands, likely men to make good soldiers and to win honour. But David, although he was called the darling, was treated rather scurvily, I think; his very father treating him more like a servant than a son. He was set to keep sheep, an office which in his time and country was usually allotted to slaves, or to servants of the lowest class. To be a shep-

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

herd was poor work for the son of a well-to-do and much respected man; poor work for a bright gifted lad who was worth far more than all his brothers put together. But, poor as it was, David did it well. And all work is good work, so that it be well done. It matters very little what we do, if it be our duty to do it; but it matters very much how we do it.

Do your work well then, whatever it may be, as well as you can; and you yourself will be the happier for it, and will help to make the world about you happier and sweeter. Even the Lord Jesus was a carpenter, and spent some years in making ploughs and carts, and the commonest kinds of tables and chairs. That does not seem very fit or dignified work for Him to have had to do. And yet, are you not quite sure He did it well, that there were no better made chairs and tables, or carts and ploughs than His in all Galilee?

2. While doing his work well, David sought to cultivate and improve himself. It was while he was a shepherd that he grew so skilful in playing on the harp as to be able to minister to the diseased mind of Saul. It was while a shepherd that he trained himself to discover a beauty in the stars, in the woods, in the fields, in trees and flowers, which afterwards entered so largely into his psalms that men love to read them to this day. And there are few vocations which have not their appropriate avocations: that is to say, there is hardly any kind of work you have to do as a duty which does not train, or does not afford you leisure to train, some faculty or gift by which you may hereafter minister to the welfare, or the pleasure, of your neighbours.

A lad who keeps sheep may as well learn to play the harp as not, and a great deal better. It is no hindrance to duty. And it will keep him from those 'idle hands' for which Satan is ever finding something to do, and will give him the dexterous fingers for which God will find much to do, and much that will help to make the world sweeter and better.

3. Last of all: while David did his work well, and cultivated his gifts diligently, he gave himself to the service of God. It was the Lord whom he served, he said, that delivered him out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear. What struck the servants of Saul most in him was that 'the Lord was with him.' 'He is very skilful,' they said to the king, 'and very brave, very prudent, and very comely: and the Lord is with him.' And surely, a lad must have been noted for a simple and sincere piety of whom that was the last and chief thing to be said.

S. COX.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

David and the Philistine.

I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them . . . and he took his staff in his hand and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag: and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.
1 SAMUEL xvi. 39, 40.

THE words recall to you at once the whole vivid story of the combat between the stripling David and the Philistine giant Goliath. It is a simple tale from the memories of border warfare in an early and somewhat rude time. Yet this tale and others such as the Divine Spirit, who breathed into dust the breath of life and used the Virgin's womb for the manifestation of the God of Glory to man, has been pleased to choose by a power of which we feel the presence though we cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, as a vehicle to convey to simple child-hearts in every generation the food of the divine Word. It comes to us as a link in a divinely fashioned golden chain on whose centre God hung, by the Incarnation, the white glory of the Heavenly Diamond; and as one thread in a web of the stored spiritual experience and associations of God's people. As such we find, and as such we treat it, and in its details, pressing them, not mechanically or fantastically, but lovingly and reverently, for the virtue which they can give out. On one such feature, I can hardly call it a detail, of the story, so closely connected is it with the spirit of the whole, I ask you now to dwell.

The sling and the five smooth stones out of the brook contrasted in their simplicity with the helmet of brass upon Goliath's head, with the coat of mail whose weight was five thousand shekels; with the greaves of brass upon his legs, and the target of brass upon his shoulders; with the spear, whose staff was like a weaver's beam, and its head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; with the shield which an attendant bore before him, are the features of striking picturesqueness in the story. Are they more? I am not going to ask you now to see, as reverent memories and imaginations ever carrying the Christ with them and taught to look for Him everywhere in the Scriptures have seen, in the five stones, of which one was enough to slay the giant, the five books of the Mosaic Law, of which one, the fifth, was enough in the sling of the Good Shepherd to discomfit Satan in the temptation in the wilderness. Of such interpretations some at least of us of this generation may venture to say, and to say, be it observed, without any meaning of disparagement, 'I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them.' But looking closer, as it is more natural to us to do, to see whether there is a connection between this detail of the sling and the lasting human or ethical interest of

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

the story, we detect that this is so in a most significant sense. For as we follow the story, the slenderness of the sling and stones as an outfit for such an enterprise is not more emphasised than the connection between them and the shepherd boy's past. Such as they were, he was accustomed to them. They were his weapons, perhaps his playthings in the past, and in their use, as in that of the staff which he takes in his hand, his craft was at home. The impression thus made is heightened by a contrast, the offer of soldierly and royal armour, met by the answer, 'I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them.' And finally, the main drift of the story itself interprets to us these incidents, when we perceive that its moral lesson is not one of faith simply, or of courage simply but specifically of courage bred of faith in a strength which has been put to proof, 'The Lord which delivered me out of the grasp of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.' The staff, the sling, and the unproved armour, come out like those details of a picture or a building which recall in quaint or graceful forms the main idea of the artist's work.

Elsewhere the same impressive history of the rise of the shepherd boy to the throne yields a different yet closely kindred lesson. 'He chose David His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: from following the ewes great with young He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.' The pastoral care and the courageous championship of the shepherd of the people have alike been trained in the humble scenes of early life, and the spirit of them is found in the faith and faithfulness of the shepherd lad.

There are two ways in which David might have forfeited his victory.

I. First he might have forfeited it by a careless neglect of the simple opportunities of a boy. He had only to keep the sheep. It would have been boy-like to have gone after play or after comrades and leave the flock. It would have been the different but equally fatal mistake of a gifted nature to dream away the hours with his back on the turf and his face to the sky, building air-castle of future exploits, the while the beasts preyed on the straying sheep. David avoided the one mistake and the other. He had his play, indeed, that skill which sends the stone like a bullet to the Philistine's brow will not have come to such perfection without many a shot at passing quarry or jutting rock; but it was play which made him fitter for work, training him in the free use of the favourite weapon of his tribe; making his arm suppler and stronger, and his eye more keen. And he had his battle, too, in his own way; he was watchful to detect and bold to face the prowling and preying beast. And though

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

these may seem simple things, yet to the doer of them there was a strong sense and clear knowledge that there was a power with him in them, and if his conflict with the lion and the bear prepared him to face Goliath by steadying his nerve and strengthening his self-reliance, it did so much more by giving him proof of the supporting and protecting presence of his God.

II. But David had a second danger to avoid. It was the danger of unproven armour. Amid the clash of arms, confronted with the brazen giant, drawn by the pleasure of being a man like the rest, he might well have been tempted to meet like with like, and though strong in courage and sinew have deemed that they would work by sword and spear. But the secret of success lay in the sling; a simple arm, but one of which he was sure, and which he could wield to its uttermost strength. We can feel that a twofold instinct guided him right; the royal armour was grand, but he knew that he would be uneasy in it; and meanwhile his fingers twitched on the sling-strings with the half-unconscious sense of how they could hurl against that blustering front.

What is the danger of unproven armour for any of us? It is not difficult to see; and it may seem to be the very opposite of that which we have considered. It is the danger of those who look forward, not too little, but too readily or too confidently, and who do so because they believe themselves amply ready to face life. They feel full armed with well-appointed mail and weapons; it may be with all the ready and adaptable resources of high academical and social culture; it may be with the keen thoughts, and bright ideals, social and philanthropic, which they deem to characterise their generation. Or, most probably of all, it may be with confidence in the strength of divine truth and a divine system, which they have themselves embraced, and in the strength of which it would be faithless to doubt that they will succeed with others. Far be it to speak scornfully or disparagingly of such as these, they have much in them of the mettle of the future warrior: the day was to come when David too would do valiantly with sword and spear. But they have much to learn. The shield and sword, the spear and armour of God and of His Church are not for the first comer to wield with mastery. Doctrine the most true, arguments the most convincing, ideas the most lovely will somehow be found not to strike home; and it will be well for the user if hampered and perhaps wounded he is not tempted into reaction of disheartenment or cynicism to cast them all aside and turn his back upon the battle. We have then here, another danger, and opposite though it seems, it may really be combined, and often be with the other. The man who adjourns responsibility will think that he can put on the whole armour at pleasure in the future, and

OUTLINES ON THE LESSONS

that in the strength and completeness of a professional outfit he could be a match for any enemy.

The victory of David was won not only by the sling and stone, but by the proved and trusted presence of God. 'The Lord which delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, whom thou hast defied. This assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's.' We need men who are familiar with that presence, to whom the worship of sons in Christ is a thing which they have proved as much as Christian thought or Christian obedience, who have known what it is to 'touch God's right hand in the darkness and be lifted up and strengthened,' to whom the quiet times of prayers, not of prayers only but of prayer, of communion with God, of meditating on His word, of hearing His inward voice, of meeting Him in the blessed converse which His unspeakable condescension makes for us in the Sacrament of divine gift and human offering, are as the bath from which the warrior goes forth pure and fresh to his strife. We need men of that rare, that unique mettle, free in all its boldness from the pride and haughtiness of heart with which Eliabs may charge it, unboastful in success, patient in difficulty, undismayed even by those worst trials which come to us from feeling the crippling weakness that our own neglect and faults (as individual men or as a church) have brought upon us, that mettle which belongs only to men of prayer. Theirs is the strength which speak in the words which we have not yet learnt to separate from David. 'The Lord is my strength, in whom I will trust. By Thee I have run through a troop, and by my God I have leaped over a wall. It is God that girdeth me with strength.'

BISHOP TALBOT.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY OR VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Sacrifice of Christians.

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.
1 S. PETER iv. 16-19.



PETER says that a Christian is to accept the pain and shame of martyrdom thankfully, not as though he were winning glory before God and His Church, so much as because he is receiving a salutary chastisement for his sin: 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?' The judgment of the world is coming—the judgment of the Christian Church must come first; and, since the world's judgment is to be so terrible, we cannot complain if the Church's judgment also be severe. The suffering Christian saint deserves all that he suffers; he is too happy to be spared the worse suffering of the sinner and the unbeliever.

I. This part of S. Peter's encouragement to martyrdom concerns us practically; in fact, his using such a topic of encouragement to Christian confessors in prospect of martyrdom is, to us, little less than terrible. S. Peter was writing of what he knew, of what he felt in his heart. He remembered how, long ago, Jesus had said to him, 'Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.' And now he was ready, as then he thought he was, to follow Him both to prison and to death; to prison he had followed Him, and it was but a little while till he followed Him to the Cross, and from the Cross to heaven. But we know the story how at the Cross itself he shrank from claiming likeness to the Lord; how there, at the very threshold of glory, he pressed upon his soul the remembrance of his long-forgiven fall. The pain of the Cross itself was not enough for one who had even denied the Crucified. If Nero condemned S. Peter for being a Christian, S. Peter condemned himself far more severely for not being a perfect one. And such judgment as he passed on himself, such he would also recommend to his converts.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

They also were to see in the fiery trial that was to try them not only a partaking of Christ's sufferings, not only a proof that the Spirit of glory and of God rested on them, but a judgment as well. To themselves, judging as men, yet not according to men, but as men enlightened by God's Spirit, the other might be true, and martyrdom be glorious; but in the sight of God all human glory and holiness will vanish, and likeness to Christ be only a refuge from judgment, not a title to boast of. When S. Peter says, 'Judgment must begin at the house of God,' he is thinking, no doubt, of the passage in Ezekiel where the Destroyer was bidden 'begin at My sanctuary'; and he thinks of the sign of the Cross, the token of suffering with Christ, as being what Ezekiel represents it, no more than a safeguard from destruction. A martyr is made like to his Lord; yes, indeed, and woe to him if he were not!

Then, I say, is not this a serious, a terrible consideration for ourselves? If the martyrs, with all their likeness to the Lord, with such an evident token of salvation, were yet righteous in such sort as scarcely to be saved, then not only, as S. Peter says, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? but where shall we appear, however little we account ourselves ungodly, we who have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin, but rather have forgotten the exhortation that speaks to us as unto children, and bids us take patiently the loving chastisement of our Father? 'He that hath suffered in the flesh,' says S. Peter in another place, 'has ceased from sin'; but we will not believe that suffering is ever anything but an unmitigated evil, we never suffer willingly, we think it is sufficient cause to excuse us from anything that would else be a clear duty, if we see that it would cause us suffering, that we ourselves should be the worse off for doing it. We think it something great and heroic if we or any one else does a duty that costs him something, we think that such an act puts a man above criticism, that before God and men he must be faultless. And indeed, such an act, when it is done disinterestedly and with the spirit of self-sacrifice carried through consistently to the end, does carry with it the certainty, not indeed of faultlessness, but of perfect forgiveness. To a martyr, and, in proportionate measure, to any one who has made any sacrifice for Christ's sake, forgiveness and salvation are assured. Only, even these need to be forgiven, they receive salvation not of debt but of grace. After a hard day's work out of doors and a new evening's work to meet him when he comes home, after all things have been done that were commanded him, the Christian will say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.' It becomes us not to say anything in depreciation of the glory of martyrdom or the grace shown it, yet we may remember that martyrdom itself was, to those who were called

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

to it, nothing but a plain matter of duty, that the only alternative for one declining it was a great and damnable sin, the direct denial of Christ. Now, if this greatest of all works of holiness was not a freewill offering but a binding duty, how much more must this be true of such small sacrifices as we find ourselves able to make and are so proud of making?

II. But indeed I go back a step further and ask, do we make any sacrifices at all? Is there anything, any gain or happiness of any sort, that we ever knowingly and willingly forgo when we might take it, because we shall serve God better without it than with it? I do not say, of course, that none of us have, but it is something quite exceptional with most of us to do so. We think seriously of our duties and try to do them, we have our affections towards God stirred sincerely and more or less deeply, and in one or both of these respects we feel some confidence that we are leading Christian lives. And perhaps, as far as these things go, we are doing so, but there is a further token wanted to stamp a man as a perfect Christian; there must be a sacrifice of self, a suffering with Christ, if the likeness to Christ is to be complete. I say, then, what sacrifices do we make, what sufferings do we endure, in His company and for His sake?

Yes, let us ask that question, ask it with fear and anxiety; only we may allow ourselves to remember what the Lord Himself said to the disciples when they asked the same: 'The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.' He can save men, as the Lord then intimated, in spite of the external circumstances that lead to self-indulgence. He can do that; one thing He will not do, and that is to save them in spite of self-indulgence itself. But in spite of all else, of position in life that makes self-indulgence easy, of habits that make it seem natural, of a public opinion that makes it seem right, in spite of all He can and will save those who trust in Him. He will save them, but only in one way, through suffering. So we reach S. Peter's conclusion: 'Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.' He who saved the martyrs so gloriously and gave them grace for so great a sacrifice, will give grace and salvation to us also, according to our measure. He is a faithful Creator; His mercy endureth for ever, and He will not despise the work of His own hands, the cost of His Son's blood. We trust in Him, we call upon Him, to bring us safe through the pleasures of the world. He will make for us 'room to deny ourselves.' He will give us opportunities for self-sacrifice and grace to use them. So, and so only, through Christ's door, He will bring us into Christ's kingdom, the kingdom of the Crucified.

W. H. SIMCOX.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Why are ye fearful?

Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? S. MATTHEW viii. 26.

I. **N**OTICE the storm without. We must take into account the circumstances about us before we can effectually point out our own duties under those circumstances. First, then, the storm is not actually upon us; but there is no reason why our present subject should not be treated as if it were. If little faith be shown when the storm comes, it is because much faith was not stored up in advance of the storm or of its possibility. The storm is not upon us; and therefore now is the time to review our position and to put by treasures of faith for the dark and stormy day. Our position then is this. We live in a world the foundations of which are being broken up. Never was this fact so signally manifested as now. Never, again, has been so signally shown the utter disproportion between motives and results. Enormous are the calamities inflicted; utterly inadequate are the reasons which can be assigned for the infliction. In some wars, even in the presence of terrible results, it has been impossible not to exclaim, 'And yet it is no wonder!' Great issues have been involved, or men's minds have been deeply stirred and the counter-currents of feeling have caused the boiling of the waters which centuries could not allay.

In proportion to our inability to assign adequate causes for these vast overthrows and struggles, in that same proportion should be our distrust of our apparent present safety, in that same proportion our preparedness for every possible emergency. Our preparedness in many ways. Of those ways, which are of this world and are material let others treat, they belong not here, but of that one which must condition and underlie them all, I am treating now, and I sum it up in two short but weighty words, Truth and Trust. First of all, it is essential to our national, essential to our family, essential to our individual life that we abide in truth. A false people, a false household, a false man, cannot stand in the time of trial which has come on the world. The trial shall sift the genuineness which is in men, and bodies of men; the high-built securities of outward seeming, dignities resting on prescription, faith founded only on formulæ, will not more stand than armies whose strength is on paper. Whether it be security, whether it be dignity, whether it be faith, in order to abide a trial such as is trying other nations, these must be the genuine existence of those elements which ought to compose them.

II. Now, in thus speaking there is, of course, a danger of being mistaken. In times of trial and change it is a common error to

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

suppose that all which has with it prescription, all that bears fair outward seeming, all that is embodied in formulæ, must necessarily be delusive and untruthful. Men of unstable and shallow minds, especially if they be also possessed by personal vanity prompting them to make themselves conspicuous, find an easy way to celebrity in crying down the prescriptions, the institutions, the formulæ, of the faith of their day. It is no uncommon thing to encounter persons who in a blustering or contemptuous tone set down honoured customs which they do not understand, and speak with contempt of a faith which they are not earnest enough or not intelligent enough to comprehend. I need not say that such is not the course suited for a day of trial. In fact, there are no greater enemies than such persons are, of real simplicity and truthfulness. One cannot conceive a worse sham than the man who contrives to hide the depths of his own personal wants for time and eternity by the counterfeit earnestness of protesting against the faith of others. God knows our poor human nature has enough to do in this our conflict with decay, in which we are sure to be beaten, to catch hold of any firm point of faith and hope. Let not its struggles be weighted and impeded by the flippant and worthless, who, because they are afraid of the light themselves, would fain obstruct those who are seeking to find it. It is not this kind of counterfeit candour, this carping at all true faith because some faith may be untrue, for which I am pleading. History has seen it on its trial; and we have only to look over our channel to see what it has wrought. Not this, but an earnest, constant desire to make all safe and sure, to wear no armour which has not been tried, to countenance no false pleadings, no subterfuges, no skimming over of difficulties: to be ready to sacrifice the most venerable prescription, the most approved formula if it be shown to be out of harmony with straightforwardness, with charity, with light poured upon us by the Word of the Lord in the day in which we live. Let this be our truth, and having this truth, then, next, let us trust Him in whom we believe. Loving Him, serving Him, we shall not be sitting still and folding our hands, we shall be striving not to be unwise, but understanding what is His will respecting us, and this will lead us to activity in preparation for whatever He may please to reveal to us of His coming purposes. If the storm be to break upon our vessel we shall not be found sleeping, but alert and intent upon our watch. All this I mean by vigilance and confidence. Of one who answered such a description it was said, 'He shall not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast, trusting in the Lord.'

HENRY ALFORD.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The End of the Commandment.

The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. I TIMOTHY I. 5.

IN the full consciousness and in the blessed spirit of the unity of God's law and Christ's gospel, let us see what is the end, the purpose, of that manifestation of God to us. The end of the commandment is charity, is love.

I. Now, taking this declaration in its simplicity and looking out over the Christian world, we are disposed, simply enough perhaps on our part, to say, what a pity it is that people do not oftener ask themselves amidst all their conscientious observance of Christianity and all their life-long toil to do their duty by it, whereunto it all tends; what is the one general effect which He who ordained Christianity as a great commandment for us intended it to produce. For it seems to me that this is not, or, at all events, is not commonly done. Look at the lives, listen to the words of earnest faithful men and women—a noble utterance here, a blessed act of self-denial there, a firm testimony to great doctrines when it is required—these we may find; but is it not true that the lives of most religious people are but a heap of scattered efforts, the reachings of a hand in the dark, the utterances of thought without a centre, the glitterings of unstrung jewels shed upon the ground? Mark the man as life goes on and grey hairs gather upon him; follow him in his business; listen to him in society; what has the advancing Christianity of our day gained by his Christianity? He has been blameless at school, blameless in apprentice life or in college life, constant in prayer, in the chamber and at church, having the 'pure heart,' cherishing the 'good conscience,' living by the 'faith unfeigned.' Wherein has he grown? Whereby can men take ever more and more certain note of him that he has been all these years with Jesus? Surely this is one of the great faults of our time, that we do not find any given end of the commandment notably served in men who have been all their lives in the practice of it; that men and women move about us of whom we know that they have been long eminent in the Church of Christ, who are looked up to as examples and lights of the religious life, and yet they are none the better for all this, their temper none the sweeter, their words none the gentler, their acts none the more considerate to others. One of the chief reasons why Christianity is so much called in question in these days, so much pulled to pieces and cavilled at, is this, that it is not seen producing its effect in society, and on the

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

members of society. We talk about our pure and apostolic faith in this land; we call it a high privilege evermore to go close up to the fountains and draw. The open Bible, the holy words of the Loving One, the fervent sayings of His Apostles heard in every household, taught to every child, these are boasts which rise from our pulpits and platforms; but men are beginning to ask, 'What is the use of this familiarity with the person of Christ, if it does not make us like Christ, and where is the profit of an apostolic faith if it takes no note of apostolic example?' And the eye naturally turns to others than us who take their Christianity lower down and who have surrendered to earthly authorities that freedom of judgment which we so jealously guard; and men see, or they seem to see, more visible effect produced for the faith and for the toil; they think they find tempers more subdued, spirits more calm, holier lives, more saintly devotion, and the consequences are, with those who cannot see through nor appreciate the truth of things, error and perhaps defection, and with those who can, an indifferent contempt for all forms of that religion which cannot in its purity mould a man's life to its image, and which, if it have any effect, is obliged to borrow it from lower motives and meretricious influences. These things ought not so to be. We have been a land of reformed churches long enough to have made more visible progress towards the end and purpose of our faith, if it have an end and purpose. If we have not done so, it behoves us to stand and consider our ways.

II. 'Now the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned.'

These latter clauses may be regarded as a limitation, a conditioning of the love which is 'the end of the commandment.' The stream is not to receive impure accession, nor is it to lose its distinctive character and quality; and this negative meaning of such expressions in Scripture has ever been the more welcome one in the Church. It admits of being pushed so far as to nullify the real force and stress of the precept or declaration. Thus, for instance, when S. James tells us that 'the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable,' there are not wanting persons among us who persuade themselves that the duty of being peaceable does not begin till the perfection of purity has been reached, and in this way they evade altogether the bearing of the declaration on their own conduct. Thus too when S. Paul concludes his Epistle to the Ephesians with the large-hearted Christian benediction, 'Grace be to all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,' or 'in incorruption,' these same persons will narrow down the import of this last word till it comes to include only their own religious body, nay, within that body, only their own set of doctrinal opinions: and thus not in those alone but in a

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

hundred other instances are we literally doing that which our Lord charged the Scribes and Pharisees with doing, making void the word of God in order to maintain our tradition.

But if these specifications in our text are in some sense limitations, that sense is but a secondary one. They have not only a negative but they have also a strong positive and declaratory force full of instruction to us of this day. Let us see what it is. The phrase 'of a pure heart' occurs in Holy Scripture sometimes in its most obvious sense of a heart cleansed from defilement, but perhaps even oftener in that which it seems to bear here, the sense of a single undivided purpose. Thus we have in the Epistle of S. James, 'Purify your heart, ye double-minded.' Thus too we read of them that 'serve God out of a pure heart.' Thus again S. Paul said of himself that he served God from his forefathers 'with pure conscience.' Thus again, in Old Testament language, we are told that 'the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever,' and the pure heart in our text out of which that charity which is 'the end of the commandment' is to spring is plainly of this kind, singleness of purpose without admixture of side aims and selfish views; and here is one chief root of the evil among ourselves, that the stream with us does not run pure, our hearts are not set, our lives are not devoted to the simple glorification of God by Christ, but to the furtherance of some certain system of opinions or some defined set of agencies which have gathered round and for us embodied the great central purpose of Christianity. Let us not conceal from ourselves the truth, however unwelcome to a self-satisfied and boastful Church, that want of singleness of heart and devotion simply to God's work is the cause of most of the wars and fightings which are grievously prevailing within our own body, and of the unsympathising spirit which we show towards those who, differing in their outward forms, are as much servants of Christ as ourselves. If the commandment be one and have one end, then I submit to you that it is impossible that this end can be attained any more than other ends in life, except by those whose energies are centred towards its attainment. But is this so with us? Is not our judgment of one another, is not our judgment of those without, evermore complicated by considerations over and above the simplicity which is in Christ? We are verily guilty concerning our brother, and of that guilt we are reaping the consequences in coldness and confusion and distrust among ourselves, in a paralysed action at the present and dark misgivings for the future.

III. As 'faith unfeigned' and 'a conscience void of offence' are the real source of charity, so the charity which flows from them is no breaker-down of conscientious conviction nor of doctrinal purity, no bringer-in of indifferentism. That charity which necessitates com-

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

promise is of this world, and not of Christ. Probably no Christian sects ever differed more widely in matters of Church practice than did S. Paul and the Apostles who ruled the Church at Jerusalem. Read, with our modern ideas, the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians; read the whole epistle as compared with the Epistle of S. James, and you would wonder how the actors in the scene which that chapter describes, how the writers of those two epistles could ever have worked together with a common creed and under a common Master. But notwithstanding, the rigid upholders of the law gave to the great innovator of Tarsus the right hand of fellowship; notwithstanding they agreed that he should go to the Gentiles while they ministered to the circumcision: and in heart S. James and S. Paul loved and obeyed the same Lord. The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, to be held with no respect of persons, enjoined in the one, is the same thing as the faith working by love in Him in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, but He is all in all, so gloriously set forth by the other. Let these be our examples; let us follow them as they followed Christ. Let us bear in mind that there may be many stirs among men, many striking displays, many echoings of human applause in the Church as well as in the world, but that in keeping the commandment, as indeed in all things, but especially in keeping the commandment, because it is the voice of the Eternal One, it is he that looketh to the end who shall never do amiss.

HENRY ALFORD.

Religion and Science.

(A Sermon on Hygiene.)

I. **I**T is the duty of every one of us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. But we have read the gospels very ignorantly, if we have not seen that the way to show true allegiance to Christ is by trying to live as Christ lived. To leave the world when we go, in ever so infinitesimal a measure, a little wiser, a little purer, a little happier—that is the true work of the true man; and to achieve this, alike for himself and for his neighbour, a man must learn, that the voice of nature is the voice of God.

‘Nature,’ said a great German thinker, ‘cares nothing for the individual. She tosses her creatures out of nothingness, and tells them not whence they come nor whither they go. She leaves man in darkness. She snatches up, and whirls us on till we are tired, and

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

drop from her arms.' Yes, and all this is for our good ; and here in Westminster Abbey, at the central point of a nation's history, we have to acknowledge again and again that the men who have studied these laws of nature deserve a nation's gratitude. Here lies Sir Isaac Newton, the greatest and one of the whitest souls that ever lived. Here lies Sir John Herschel, who expanded our knowledge and store of infinities of heaven. Here lies Charles Darwin, most consummate of observers and fearless theorists. Here lie not a few of those great physicians who showed the hidden springs of life and disease. What have men like these done for us? They have recognised that, in the physical no less than in the moral world, a man's life depends in great measure on his observance of and obedience to the great laws which God has ordained, and God evidently meant us to study and to observe and to obey those laws. There is a famous picture, in which a German painter has depicted Satan as playing with a man at chess for his soul. 'Substitute,' says this great thinker — 'substitute for the mocking fiend in the picture a calm, strong, angel playing for love, as we say, who would rather lose than win, and you accept it as the image of human life.' Now, in no small measure education consists in the laws of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of nature, under which name I include, not merely things for their forces, but men and their ways, and the fashioning of the affections of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with these divine laws. But I want you to observe that the observation of these laws, and the study of these facts, involves lessons directly religious. Science teaches us exactly what Scripture teaches. Science, too, has her thundering Sinai of God. Science, too, preaches the stern and inexorable application of God's moral requirements. Science, too, tells every one of us that we must keep our bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity. Science furnishes outside confirmation of the first table of the Decalogue, and overwhelming proof of the necessity of the second. I claim then that the work of all these busy and eager minds, devoted to the illustration of the natural phenomena of social laws, is work which the Church of God most heartily blesses and approves. They were studying with exemplary reverence God's three great bibles of nature, of history, and of experience. Their work for the good of humanity is a work of service for Christ. It is founded on the conviction that the apparent indifference of nature merely means the beneficent fixity of the moral law of God. Every triumph of that science which, for the good of mankind, the present Congress has met to promote, has only been rendered possible by the blessed invariableness of law.

II. Let us then in conclusion sweep aside, with something of dis-

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

dain, the feeble apprehension of an antiquated theology, that science can ever be hostile to religion, or that God's works ever can contradict anything which is in His Word. Science may be hostile, curiously and convincingly hostile, to much that calls itself religion; and science may read in the books of God much which is not in accordance with what has been taught as though it was His Word; but to God's material forces, no less than to our living souls, God has given a law which may not be broken. He has no favourites. He is no respecter of persons. The sun, as a wise thinker says, smiles on the arctic wastes and on the teeming cities. What science calls the uniformity of nature, faith accepts as the fidelity of God. We trust God more because there is in nature no devilish element, no wild impulse; and when we thus see nature with her manifold mysteries, when we see her warning us against the awful self-chosen cause of our misery and our degradation, when we see her rebuking the faithlessness of utter despair, then we thank our God that her steps are measured, her laws unchangeable; and though explanations cannot always be wrung from her, nor all her secrets forced out of her, yet we trust her still, because she is a minister of God. 'He maketh the winds his spirits, and the flaming fires his ministers.' Nay, more, we see then that the word 'nature' is a figure of imagination; we see then that the word 'nature' is nothing but a synonym for God's manifestation. The teaching of science, taken alone, would be terrible and imperfect. It only attains the full glory of its meaning to the Christian when it is divinely supplemented by Him who was the Word of God.

DEAN FARRAR.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Eye. SOME years ago an American astronomer, wanting to gaze at some object low down in the sky, lowered his telescope so as to sweep the horizon: a peculiar sight then appeared on the disc of the instrument, when he put his eye to it. The telescope was just in a line with an orchard of fruit trees, six miles distant; and from his point of observation he saw certain men robbing this orchard. Their features and actions were all seen: none could escape detection, for identification was complete. Little did they think of the big eye of that telescope being upon them—covered, too, as they might think, by the darkness of the night. Less did they think perhaps of that Omniscient Eye which beholds the evil and the good, and to which the darkness and the light are both alike.

ILLUSTRATIONS

*Eyes, the
Seven.*

THE Bible is the book of books; the inspiration of Heaven. When John saw the Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes in the midst of the throne, he would at once conclude it was divine. In the whole creation there was nothing like it. And the stone with seven eyes that Zerubbabel saw, could have been hewn from no earthly quarry. The scroll of the starry firmament has evidently been written by the eternal power, the traces of whose figures may be discerned in sun, moon, and stars. But in this book we have something more. I thank God for human composition; but the Book of God lights up the whole with the dawn of everlasting life. I see that it has seven eyes ever looking out upon me.

Fishers.

THE night season is the most favourable time for catching fish (S. Luke v. 5). Yet there were unsuccessful nights; such an one was this. A symbol of the utter failure of the fishers of men without Christ, as verse 6 illustrates their abundant success with Christ.

Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,		ROMANS VI. 3-11.
GOSPEL,		S. MATTHEW V. 20-26.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,		2 SAMUEL I.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,		2 SAMUEL XII. 6-24, or 2 SAMUEL XVIII.
SECOND LESSONS,		ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

King Saul.

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul . . . How are the mighty fallen !
2 SAMUEL i. 24-25.



Y text will indicate my subject. I have chosen the story of King Saul, partly because fragments of that story have been brought before us in our Old Testament Lessons. Apart from its own exceeding interest, it is surely one of the most impressive of those tragic narratives, of which the earlier history, as well as the early legends, of many human nations, as of our own not least, are so strangely fertile, worthy, quite apart from its high associations, to rank in pathos with the very saddest of them all. Those to whom, not least, I would speak—the youth of this congregation—will, I trust, feel its spell, and not turn from its teaching.

One word I would say beforehand. It is emphatically a story not of the New Testament, but of the Old, not even of the age of

OUTLINE ON THE EPISTLE

II. Christ's risen life is to us a fact of undying significance. The Resurrection was not an isolated miracle, done and then over, leaving things much as they had been before. The risen Christ is not, like Lazarus, marked off from every other man as one who had visited the realms of death, but knowing that he must ere many years pass be a tenant of the grave. 'Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more.' His risen body is made up of flesh, bone, and all things pertaining to the perfection of man's nature; but then it has super-added qualities. It is so spiritual that it can pass through closed doors without collision or disturbance. It is beyond the reach of those causes which, slowly or swiftly, bring down our bodies to the dust. Throned in the heavens, now, as during the forty days on earth, it is endowed with the beauty, with the glory, of an eternal youth. Being raised from the dead, it dies no more. The perpetuity of the life of the risen Jesus is the guarantee of the perpetuity of His Church. Alone, among all forms of society which bind men together, the Church of Christ is ensured against complete dissolution. When our Lord was born the civilised world was almost entirely comprised within the Roman empire, a vast social power which may well have appeared, as it did appear to the men of that age, destined to last for ever. Since then the Roman empire has as completely disappeared from the earth as if it had never been. And other kingdoms and dynasties have risen up and have in turn gone their way. Nor is there any warrant or probability that any one of the states or forms of civil government which exist at the present time will always last. And there are men who tell us that the kingdom of Christ is or will be no exception to the rule—that it too has seen its best days and is passing. We Christians know that they are wrong, that whatever else may happen, one thing is impossible—the complete effacement of the Church of Jesus Christ. And what is our reason for this confidence? It is because we know that Christ's Church, although having likeness to other societies of men in her outward form and mien, is unlike them inwardly and really. She strikes her roots far and deep into the invisible; she draws strength from sources which cannot be tested by our political or social experience. Like her Master, she has meat to eat that men know not of. 'God is in the midst of her, and therefore she shall not be removed; God shall help her, and that right early.'

III. Christ risen from death, dying no more, is the model of our new life in grace. I do not mean that absolute sinlessness is attainable by any Christian here. But at least faithfulness in our intentions, avoidance of known sources of danger, escape from presumptuous sins, innocence, as the Psalmist puts it, of the great offence—these things are possible, and indeed are necessary. Those lives which are made

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

up of alternating recovery and relapse, even lives lived, as it were, with one foot in the grave, without anything like a strong vitality, with their feeble prayers, with their half-indulged inclinations, with their weaknesses which may be physical, but which a really regenerate will should at once away with, men risen from the dead, yet without any seeming promise of endurance in life—what would S. Paul say to these? ‘Christ,’ he would say, ‘being raised from the dead, dieth no more.’ Just as He left His tomb once for all, so should the soul, once risen, be dead indeed unto sin. There must be no hovering about the sepulchre, no treasuring the grave-clothes, no secret hankering after the scent and atmosphere of the guilty past. Cling to the risen Saviour. Cling to Him by entreaties which twine themselves round His sacred person. Cling to Him by sacraments, the revealed points of contact with His strengthening manhood. Cling to Him by obedience and by works of mercy, through which, He tells us Himself, we abide in His love. And then, not in your own strength but in His, ‘likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

H. P. LIDDON.

III. OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL

Gospel Righteousness.

Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. S. MATTHEW V. 20.



THE scribes and Pharisees were the religious people, the leaders of the religious world, of our Lord's earthly day. They sat in Moses' seat; and whatsoever they bid you observe, He said of them Himself, that observe and do. They of whom He could thus speak did not bear upon their front, we may well suppose, the avowal of their own offensiveness in the sight of God. I draw from their condition, as it was towards man and as it was towards God, a reflection as to the possibility of there being unawares people like them amongst ourselves. If there be such persons, they will not know it, nor shall we. They will think themselves good, and we probably shall suppose them so. They will be found, if they exist at all, among the frequenters of Church and of the Sacrament, among the givers to our charities, among the maintainers of a good

OUTLINE ON THE GOSPEL.

name and of a strict discipline. It is of the essence of a Pharisee that he passes for a religious man. If there be Pharisees now, they will not be found among the blasphemers or among the profligate.

We will mark, in two or three obvious points, the fatal defects of the Pharisaical righteousness.

I. The first of these was its formalism. The vigour of the plant was all thrown upwards: it had stalk and leaf, but it had no root, and therefore no produce.

There is perhaps no matter which makes a larger demand upon Christian wisdom and Christian discernment, wisdom in the teacher, discernment in the hearer, than the use and abuse of forms. It is evident that a religion which dispenses with forms breaks down eventually even in its spirituality. The experiment has been tried—tried seriously and confidently, tried by true Christians and with a high Christian aim; but the result has ever been this: in the second generation, if not in the first, a congregation or a sect or a school of professed Christians, formed on the basis of a spiritual isolation, of a worship dispensing wholly with ordinances, has been proved by experience to have attempted an impossibility. In fact, the history of the Church has been a perpetual oscillation between the too much and the too little in these respects; between a worship oppressed with carnality and a worship extinguished in the effort to sublime it.

The spirit of formalism is a secret and a subtle thing: it creeps in where there should be everything to bar its entrance, and infects the devotion of many with a slow but fatal poison. Never put away from you, never regard as a wearisome truism, the caution which bids you to beware of it. The formalism of the Pharisee, his proneness to value himself upon the punctuality of his worship and upon the minuteness of his ceremonial obedience, should ever occupy in our minds a foremost place when we seek to lay to heart the warning voice of our Lord, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.'

II. Again, in close connection with the vice of formalism in worship was that of literalism in doctrine. The spirit of the Pharisee was shown in a treatment of God's moral law at once most superficial and most arbitrary. The commandments of God were made of none effect by their tradition. Paltry evasions and quibbling distinctions, most unworthy of the greatness and of the wisdom of God, were introduced by the scribes into the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and by the help of them they could make the oracles of God dumb or contradictory at their pleasure, silent to themselves when inclination drew another way, oppressive to the consciences of

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

others when the teacher would forbid that to which he himself had no leaning or attraction. In such hands the salt of truth utterly lost its savour, and revelation itself could no longer act as a light to the path of wayfaring and often erring men.

III. The spirit of the formalist and of the literalist was also, in the last place, a spirit of self-satisfaction and of self-conceit. The Pharisees formed a clique, and lived within it. Their very name denoted exclusiveness and isolation. Their very name said, Stand apart: we are holier than thou. It was this sort of pretension which drew down upon them the severest censures of the Lord the righteous Judge. If they had been blind, He told them, they had not had sin: if they had felt themselves to be in need of light, that one admission would have been a sign of grace. But saying, We see, their sin remained; it was sealed upon them hopelessly and fatally.

The one gate into Christ's kingdom is humility. Except in this sense ye be the very opposite of the scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

Sin, Forgiveness, and Punishment.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.—2 SAM. xii. 13. And the king wept and said, Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!—2 SAMUEL xviii. 33.

I.



IN the presence of law, simply as law, there is no pardon. We see this every day in relation to the laws of nature. There, what is done is done, and what is written is written for ever. Against the breaker of the laws of nature there goes out the sentence: 'I went by, and lo! he was gone; I sought him, but his face could nowhere be found.' We acknowledge it again, though with some reservation, in regard to the laws of humanity. They ought to punish; they must punish; it is treason against society if, in fear or mistaken mercy, they shrink from punishing. The voice of the judge falters as he pronounces the sentence, the extreme sentence, but he must pronounce it still. But in personal relations, thank God! it is not so. There we know the blessedness of receiving a full and a free pardon; and there we know the yet higher

OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

blessedness of giving it to our brethren; and we recognise as the highest and truest righteousness, not the iron, unbending, and undistinguishing hardness of the law, but the discriminating righteousness of love, hating, and it may be scourging, the sin, but yet caring for and loving the sinner still.

II. True indeed it is that this hope becomes a sure and certain hope only in the Revelation of God in the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In that great mystery of the Incarnation which tells us of our sonship and the Fatherhood of God in that great mystery of the Atonement in which, as has been said, 'mercy and truth have met together, and the righteousness of God and His peace have kissed each other'—in the supreme light of that revelation we can read into the text a fuller and a deeper meaning than either Nathan or David could know. But yet there was a gospel before the Gospel—nay, rather the Gospel in itself is before the foundation of the world, gradually revealed to the ages till the full manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ. And even from the beginning of Scripture, we read everywhere this divine promise of forgiveness, not so much, of course, in the history which records the march of God's visible providence, or in the law which enforces His will on the outer world of human conduct. There necessarily it is, the great law of retribution, which is wrought out, alike in the ordinary laws of His dispensation as in the baring of His arm from time to time in miracle; but when we enter into the region of the soul, in the spiritual teaching of the prophet, in the spiritual experience of the Psalmist, then that promise of forgiveness comes to us again and again. What can be brighter or more gracious than the message of God through him who has been called the Evangelical Prophet? 'Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' What can be fuller of hope, even in penitence, than the utterance of that psalm of which I have spoken? 'Thou shalt wash me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Thou shalt cleanse me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.' And all the while in the background of mystery, on which, as it were, these bright promises stand relieved, there lay the great universal rite of sacrifice, ordained by God, offered by man, in which, over and above the more obvious ideas of homage and thank-offering and self-dedication, there was implied the mysterious truth of atonement for sin, and so there was reconciliation, and the law of retribution, and the Gospel of forgiveness.

III. Forgiveness of sin is a change of spiritual relation, it is a change of spiritual condition. And the hope of that forgiveness is implied in the very conception of God and of man's nature, and

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

therefore it is revealed to us in Him alone who can reveal the Father, and alone can reveal the perfection of humanity. But yet to all of us, and especially us who know God in the Lord Jesus Christ, the old story of David's sin, and David's penitence, and David's forgiveness, has been of unspeakable comfort. Through the ages, idolatry, treachery, murder, a fearful combination of evil, the complex malignant disease of a strong and many-sided character, the necessary laws of the world, the hard moralist, the worshipper of impersonal law—they have always cried out against that forgiveness as unworthy of the term 'righteousness'; but the man who knows his own heart deeply in its all but boundless capacity of evil and of good, the man who has the faintest conception of a God of infinite love, he understands it well with a true moral insight, and he adores the Divine mercy in infinite thankfulness.

BISHOP BARRY.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Sobriety of Devotion.

Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. I S. PETER iv. 7.



THE subject which I have set myself to treat is that of sobriety of devotion, as fostered by the Church of England, or, in other words, the calm, holy, reverent spirit which the Church of England helps to form in her children. Now, first of all, what is devotion? It is the homage of the creature paid to the Creator; it is the spirit of man communing with God, who is Spirit. There must, then, be the sense of God's presence; and in all true worship there must be the frame of mind which corresponds with that sense. To me it seems plain that the spirit of one realising God would be very reverent, very solemn, and very calm. 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Outbursts of ecstatic rapture scarcely befit the sense of the awfulness of God's presence more than the formality of mere outward observance does. A tumult of unchastened excitement is little more in accordance with that sense of God's presence than the mechanical absurdity of the praying wheels of Tibet. Everything set in God's presence must be real, true, solid, filled with the reverent consciousness of that presence. You will

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

remember the words in the preface to the *Christian Year*, 'Next to a sound rule of faith there is nothing of so much consequence as a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion.' So wrote one of the most saintly and most gifted of the sons of England's Church. Now our Church gives her children no rule for private devotion, except, of course, that rule which orders the clergy to use the daily morning and evening prayer either openly or secretly. At the time of the Reformation there were certain books of private devotion provided; and lately the Lower House of the Southern Convocation has been engaged in preparing a book of private prayer. But it seems that at present the tone and spirit of devotion which the Church of England would enjoin must be gathered rather from her public prayers than from anything which she provides for the devotions of the people. What, therefore, we must now think about is the special character of the Prayer-book as a book of devotion.

I. Now, I think if I were asked what are the characteristics of the worship of the Church of England as provided for us in our Prayer-book, I should say, first of all, truthfulness. Whatever of unholy motive or of misguided action is to be traced in the Reformation—and of course we can trace both—it did set men sifting and testing both doctrine and history; it did engender a serious struggle for truth. The recklessness of legends and traditions offended against this instinctive desire after truth. I suppose in the Church of Rome very few care to question the baseless stories and no less baseless doctrines which characterise the popular devotions of that Church. Whatever the sense of honour and truth in private life, and who will deny it? a jealousy of absolute truthfulness in the sight of God is not, I think, a marked characteristic of the popular devotions of the Roman Church. Well, thank God, on the other side, the barren poverty of a mere negative protest which suffices some, I am afraid, for a religion, found no favour; but the Church built up her whole system on really primitive and catholic foundations; she set forth her doctrines from the first with no uncertain tone; there is a positive, definite, dogmatic teaching of the faith, together with an absolute reverence for the truth of God.

II. Next, I should say that reality is a great feature of the worship of the Church of England. Here, again, we shall best understand the meaning of the word by looking at the dangers on either side. On the one side the danger is formalism of mere external acts, of attendance on services not understood, of a minute and perplexing ceremonial. On the other side, the danger is of mere sentiment and emotion, a stirring of the feelings, with no very definite acts of devotion. Now, the Church of England would have all her services real, true, intelligent. They are framed for all. There are no

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

services for the initiated; all are meant to take an intelligent share in them. They are your services quite as much as ours. Look at your confessions, look at your psalms; see how your Church gives you a large share in all her worship. Above all look at her Communion Service, and remember how there is recognised the priesthood of the people; how, when we make memorial before God of the one eternal sacrifice once offered, that memorial is made, not by the one solitary priest, but made by him in the name of the people and for the people, so that all present take their part in the great solemn act which is then performed.

III. I would next mention the objective character of our worship, by which I mean the fact that it has its meaning and reality in truths existing apart from ourselves, and not depending on our own feelings or consciousness. This is, of course, especially the case in its realisation of God as the great object of worship. This feature would be opposed to all worship of the creature on the one side, and what we may call self-worship on the other. See how our Church sets before the people a belief in God's gifts. There is pardon in the absolution, and on the other side there is great danger in some cases of what we may call the error of self-absolution. In our baptismal service there is the gift of God distinctly recognised. It is no mere subjective matter depending on the faith of those present. There is the gift of God, and of course it is the same in the holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood; what we are told to seize and hold is the faith in God's promises, an assurance that God is true, a belief that God gives, and not a resting on our own miserable and deceitful feelings.

IV. And now, closely connected with this, almost as a branch of this, I would mention the historical character of our worship. See how it follows in a great measure the Christian seasons, see how much our worship hangs, as do our very creeds, upon the life of Christ. Theology, doctrinal accuracy, is good and holy and needful; but there is something you know which comes before theology, and that is history. Theology would be a mere airy weaving of unsubstantial sophistries if it were not founded on solid fact. Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. We build our worship upon history.

BISHOP WALSHAM HOW.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

Barzillai the Gileadite.

2 SAMUEL xix. 33, 34.

I. 'AND Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?' Of course Barzillai himself spoke well and wisely in this matter as concerned the offer of worldly honour and favour which David made him. It was true, as he said, that a man of his age would find no pleasure from the luxuries and amusements of the court, that he would only be a burden to his lord the king, and (though, of course, he does not say this) the king's kindness would be equally a burden to him. He could not without pain change his habits or his abode; the only happiness that he could any more have on earth was to live and die in his own city, and look forward to being buried by the grave of his father and his mother. Still he did not undervalue the king's offer; it was kindly meant, and would be an honour and a profit to those who could enjoy it. His son Chimham might take what his father could not; and we find that David not only showed kindness to him, but had his brothers also (probably when the old man was dead) to be of them that ate at his table, and gave charge to Solomon to continue the same favour to them. Moreover, David gave to Chimham a piece of land of his own at Bethlehem, which was known by his name, and probably remained in his family as late as the time of Jeremiah; so that, as far as earthly good things were worth anything, Barzillai secured the best he could of them. In an earthly sense he did wisely; and if, as is likely enough, he had any higher than earthly thoughts, these also were no less wise. He did well to sit loose to earthly joys and not make the most of such pleasure as it was still in his power to get, but, while he did his duty to his king and sought the happiness of his children, to seek nothing for himself but preparation for a death that should be holy and peaceful.

Thus Barzillai spoke well in every way in regard to the offer made to him; but we are apt to make the same answer to a similar offer when we have none of his reasons. We know who is the King who says to us, 'Come thou over with Me, and I will feed thee with Me in Jerusalem,' not David, but the Son of David. And He often has to hear the same answer as His father after the flesh, 'How long have I to live, that I should go up with the King unto Jerusalem?' an answer which, as made to Him, is not the answer of wisdom, still less of faith, but merely and utterly of unbelief.

II. It will not do to speak of unbelief as if it were simply horrible

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

and manifestly wicked ; men will not recognise the description of their own temptations if one leaves out of it all that makes the temptation attractive ; therefore it is that I seek, in saying this, to give the devil his due, to allow for all the power that his arguments may gain by seeming to embody the wisdom, the contentedness, the meekness even, of the blameless old man of the text. It is because this temper appears sober and reasonable, because it appears even penitent and humble, that it is so dangerous and so common. We think that it would make our life happier to live in faith—to live, that is, in Christ's presence, if we had not lost the faculty of receiving happiness from Christ ; but we have lost it, and we choose to despair of regaining it. And not only so, we think it not worth while to make an effort to regain it, even if we might succeed, for that the getting the pleasures of faith would do little good to us now. Such as we are, such, we think, we must be, and for this short life we do not feel as if it mattered much what we are. The world's service is hard and Christ's is sweet, but we have got used to the world and do not feel it so hard now. To take Christ's yoke upon us would be an effort, and we do not care to make any effort now ; not because we doubt that the yoke is easy, but because the character of our life is fixed and we do not think it worth changing for the remainder of our life. If we had our life to live over again we would spend it all with Christ from the first, but, as it is now, we have grown up in the land of Gilead far away beyond Jordan, and think that we may as well die in our own city and be buried by the grave of our father, the old Adam.

III. But surely there is an answer to this. 'How long have I to live?' For ever. 'How many are the days of the years of my life?' Even the days of eternity. Barzillai had few days left him on earth, and had learnt already how truly it was written that length of days like his was but labour and sorrow ; it would soon pass away, and he would be gone, whether from Jerusalem or from Gilead. But we must abide for ever, either in Jerusalem or, if not, then somewhere else. This is why I say it is unbelief that doubts the soul's power to enjoy Christ's gifts ; it is unbelief in our own immortality. True, it may be, that our sins in the past have been such that we can scarcely hope for the bliss on earth that comes from merely feeling the love of God, to those who love Him with a perfect heart ; true, it may be, that we have lost for ever the possibility of feeling such fresh, true, free, and cheerful love as the holiest Christians feel, such as perhaps we once felt ourselves. Yet not the less is it true that the Lord has bliss in store for those who have forfeited bliss, that He will stablish with His free Spirit those who have grieved His Holy Spirit before. Perhaps on earth they may never feel the profit of their penitence ; it may be that God requires of them the self-chastisement of a lifelong

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

mourning before He forgives their sin or spares them His chastisement; it may be that, though forgiven, they never dare trust in their forgiveness till the end, but have to go softly all their days in bitterness of soul; it may be that though they are forgiven and know it they yet feel such sorrow for the past and such anxiety for the present as swallows up the joy of restoration to God, even though fear for the consequences of the past is gone away. It may be, I do not say it is likely to be. For those who have sinned and repented Jesus has comforts on earth, not the same as He has for those who have been ever with Him, but almost as sweet; sweeter, indeed, to their taste, or at least fitter for their needs. Even for the few days of this earthly life it is likely that he who will resolve to pass them in the walls of Zion, in the gates of the King's palace, will find that he has a profit even out of those few days; that however fixed were his habits of living in his own city, it is worth his while to break them off and follow David to Jerusalem. But put it at the worst: suppose that the penitent sinner had lost the power to find any comfort in faith and love all the days that he remains upon earth. Hard it is for a man to sin so grievously that such will be his case; hard it is for him who has so sinned to persevere in such a course of penitence. Yet God forbid that we should doubt that it is possible. If the sinner can no more hear the voice of singing men and singing women, if his ears are too dull to take in the sweetness of the songs of Zion, the prayers of the congregation of the Lord; if he can no more taste what he eats or what he drinks, and scarcely dares to eat off his Lord's Table, and finds no pleasure there when he does; if he cannot feel or trust the intensity of his Saviour's love, but feels himself still a burden to his Lord the King, yet there is an end. If only his faith will hold out, with no sight, no taste, no sound of the truth to encourage it, the time shall come when the truth itself shall stand before him as it is, to see and hear and taste and feel. The trial he has had through his course on earth of not finding that there was any profit in Christ's service came upon him justly, for he had deserved no profit; but now he has his reward for having stood that very trial.

In the days of the beginning of the power of Rome, after the Roman army was beaten in the great battle of Cannæ and almost utterly destroyed, the nation did not lose their heart; only when the few soldiers who were left were gathered together they charged them that for having lost such a battle they were to continue to serve without pay till the end of the war. And thus they continued faithful in their country's service, though with no honour and no profit to be gained by it, until in the end these very troops were chosen to fight the decisive battle, and they came back in triumph to their country, which they had not seen for so long, having executed the

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ancient curse and made Canaan the slave of Japhet, and having set up, surely and beyond human power to shake, the last and greatest of the universal empires of this world. And so it is with the soldiers of the kingdom not of this world, which the God of Heaven hath set up: those who have won no honour and done no service may yet, if they abide faithful, have their part in its final triumph; if they accept the punishment of their iniquity, then will the Lord remember His covenant with Jacob. They shall at last have a reward for their patience and penitence which they have not won by their works; they shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, because at last they were content to believe in it without seeing in the time of this mortal life.

W. H. SIMCOX.

The Exceeding Good Land.

If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us.

NUMBERS xiv. 8.

LET us notice in reference to the heavenly Canaan:

I. Who they are in whom the Lord delights.

1. He delights not in the unpardoned sinner.

How should He? The carnal mind is enmity against God. The unconverted man is God's enemy by his wicked works. And how can two walk together except they be agreed? Instead of delighting in the wicked, we are told God is angry with the wicked every day. He is ever whetting His glittering sword; and were it not for the great Intercessor crying out, 'Spare him this year also,' He would say, 'Ah, I will ease Me of My adversaries. That rebellious sinner I have sworn shall never enter into My rest.' It is the very nature of God to loathe and abhor that which is sinful. 'Thou art not a God,' says David, 'that delighteth in wickedness.' 'Surely Thou wilt slay the wicked.' It matters not whether we profess to be the Lord's people or not. If our sins are unpardoned, and our hearts unchanged, God delights not in us. These 603,550 Israelites were God's professed people, but they never saw the promised land. It is impossible for God to view unpardoned sinners with delight. He has long patience towards them, hoping that His long-suffering will lead them to repentance, but after a time His patience is exhausted, and He at length cries, 'Bind them hand and foot, and cast them into outer darkness.'

Do you ask then, In whom does the Lord delight?

2. He delights in the justified believer.

'The Lord's delight is in them that fear Him, and that put their

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

trust in His mercy.' He delights in those who are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. 'Christ hath loved us,' says S. Paul, 'and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.' God delights in the justified believer, who depends upon the death of Christ. He smelt a sweet savour in the sacrifice Noah offered after the flood. So is He pleased with the atoning blood offered in sacrifice for the believer's iniquities. When He passed through the land of Egypt on that memorable night of Israel's deliverance He delighted in sparing those houses on which He saw the blood. So does He delight to spare all those whose hearts are sprinkled with the precious blood of Jesus. When He sees you a poor sinner, broken under a deep sense of sin, reviewing your past life, and grieving over your numberless iniquities, and looking with the eye of faith upon your crucified Lord, what does His eye then see? Why, He sees the precious blood of Jesus sprinkled upon your soul, and in you He is infinitely delighted. He sees you dipped, as it were, in the blood of the Redeemer. He looks upon you as having suffered all that Christ suffered.

And how will He manifest His delight in you? This is my next subject. I have described who they are in whom the Lord delights. Now let us consider:

II. Their sure prospect of heaven.

You see the argument of Caleb and Joshua. 'If the Lord delight in us,' then we are safe, then we may depend upon His promise, 'then will He bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey.' You say there are many difficulties in the way. And was it not so with Israel? The cities were walled and very great. The inhabitants were gigantic and strong, and they were but as grasshoppers before them; and yet all these difficulties gave way under the guidance and power of their God. And so shall it be with yourselves. 'God will bring you into this land.' Who shall interfere to prevent?

The land is 'an exceeding good land.' It is a land that floweth, indeed, with milk and honey. 'There everlasting spring abides, and never-withering flowers.' Moses said to the Israelites, 'For the land whither thou goest in to possess it is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out; but the land whither ye go to possess it is a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.' How much rather may we use that language concerning our better Canaan? That land is, indeed, a 'land which God careth for.' It is His own residence and pavilion. 'His eyes are ever upon it,' because He dwells there. How exceeding good then must be that inheritance! Did Joshua and Caleb, who had searched

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Canaan, assert it to be a 'good land?' And cannot some of you testify the same concerning heaven? Have you not by faith searched this heavenly land, and already tasted its delicious fruits? Have you not eaten grapes, grapes of Eshcol, the earnest of this inheritance, in the joys which in Christ you have already experienced? Oh, how can the land be otherwise than good, exceeding good, seeing it was prepared by God the Father for you from the foundation of the world, seeing it was purchased for you on the Cross by the Blood of God the Son, and seeing you are being fitted for it by the inworking power of God the Holy Ghost? How can that land be otherwise than good, which is Immanuel's land, the place where your adorable Redeemer displays His glory, and communicates to all His redeemed the fulness of His majesty and the overflowings of His love?

C. CLAYTON.

Faith Necessary and Supernatural.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto Him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. S. MATTHEW XVI. 13-17.

I. **T**WO truths lie upon the surface of this narrative, so plain that he that runs may read. The first is the importance attached by our Lord to the faith in Himself, and the other the supernatural character of such faith as the gift of God. The importance attached by our Lord to faith in Himself—for here there comes to the surface the end for which He had separated and was training the twelve. It was that they might gain a firm and unqualified faith in Himself—that they might know how to confess and profess His name. He had looked steadily at human nature when it made to Him its first offer of service. He had seen the unstable, shifty character of its enthusiasm, the secret taint of sin and selfishness which marred its high endeavours, and deliberately He had refused to commit Himself and His cause to such advocacy. 'When He was at Jerusalem,' it is written, 'at the passover, many believed in His name when they saw the miracles that He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of men, for He knew what was in man.' It was not that He distrusted the capacity of men for highest ends. On the contrary, He was come to bring men back into union with the Father, and to

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

make them fellow-workers with God; but He distrusted human nature as He found it. He knew, to start with, that sad secret which in slow and embittering experience has so often turned enthusiasts into cynics, and made philanthropists mad—the sad secret of human untrustworthiness. He knew it, and because He knew it He could not build the spiritual fabric of His kingdom upon the shifting sands of unregenerate human nature. ‘Except ye be converted,’ He says, ‘ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ ‘Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Humanity, that is to say, must make a fresh start, and that fresh start must be from Jesus Christ. ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by Me. I am the way. I am come that they might have life. Come unto Me.’ If they would be really restored, redeemed, set right, He assured them that they must look away from all else and be content to follow Him; and, not merely to follow Him, but to believe in Him—to contemplate Him till they understood the meaning of His mission, the secret of His person, till, behind the human leader and friend and Son of man, they discerned the Christ, the Son of God, their Lord and their God.

Thus to create this faith in Himself, He turns from the crowd and separates the twelve, that little band of men who will stand the preliminary test of obedience, and be content to forsake all and follow Him. These He takes to be with Him. These He trains into unreserved belief in His person, so that in these He can at the last find a firm nucleus for a permanent work, the solid core of a regenerate humanity. He trains them by intercourse with Himself. Thus He lets them gradually feel the authority of His word, the absolute claim of very God which He makes, and presses upon the wills and consciences of men. He lets them see His works, the life-giving power which inheres in Him and flows out from Him, the power which is only the expression of the same self as finds utterance in His teaching—the same expression, only now in outward act and now in spoken word and in fact. The authoritative words of our Lord, and His life-giving deeds, carrying with them intimations so unmistakable of a presence more than human, though so truly human—these silently, gradually take possession of the Apostles’ minds. They pass from love and admiration into awe and worship. Behind the manhood they begin to discern the Godhead. This dawning conviction is disciplined by apparent failure. Our Lord becomes unpopular with all classes. His words offend. Many of His disciples go back and walk no more with Him. Then it is that our Lord, by questioning the little band of the twelve, seeks to elicit from them the explicit confession of His name. It was in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, a place, the very name of which, recalling as it did the foreign domination of the

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Cæsars, had a depressing sound to the hopes and aspirations of patriotic Jews—it was here that He draws out from them the expression of a faith and hope which welled up from springs deeper than mere nationalism, deeper than anything which was contained within the scope of their own natures. ‘Whom do men say that I am?’ He asks them first, and they gave Him the various rumours that were abroad about Him—that He was John the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the prophets; and He makes no comment. The outer world might speak thus of Him vaguely, as of something wonderful and extraordinary, without caring to examine more closely into His claim; but of those who were to constitute His church, an exacter knowledge is required. Upon them He presses the question closer home: ‘Whom do ye say that I am?’ And silence falls upon the little band, for it is hard to put into words a struggling and half-formed conviction. But a conviction, to gain reality, must dare to utter itself; and S. Peter it is who obeys the promptings of the Spirit which all were secretly acknowledging. ‘Thou art the Christ,’ he cries, ‘the Son of the living God.’ This is what our Lord had wanted. This is what He was waiting for. He fixes, He stereotypes, this bold confession with His emphatic benediction: ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; and I say unto thee, in virtue of this thy bold confession, thou art Peter, rock-man. This confession of My name turns the shifting sands of humanity into solid rock. Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell (of death) shall not prevail against it. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; blessed art thou, for faith in Jesus Christ is the one necessity of man’s redemption. Blessed art thou, because this fundamental act of faith is not of thyself, or of anything visible or tangible, or merely human. Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee; but My Father which is in heaven.’ It was not that our Lord despised flesh and blood. Nay, why, in that case, should He have taken it? But as, on another occasion, He says, ‘The flesh profiteth nothing,’ meaning the bare flesh, the flesh of itself, so now He means that humanity of itself can never discover God or find Him out. The recognition of God must always be God’s own disclosure of Himself in the heart of man. So it is in conscience. We do not discover God, but He makes Himself felt. So it is, further on, in the recognition of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. He is incarnate, He has taken flesh and blood. ‘Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.’ In flesh He showed Himself; as man He dwelt with man. He uses human methods. It was through the experience of His true manhood that the twelve became conscious of His Godhead. Through flesh and blood they knew Him, and in the same flesh and blood they were to have eternal fellowship with Him.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

His flesh was to be their meat. His blood was to be their drink. Yet nothing the flesh and blood could do would ever amount to either imparting life or creating conviction. If, on His part, His flesh and blood are to be life-giving, it is because they are not mere flesh and blood, but something much more—spirit and life, quickening spirit. If, on their part, the reflections, the reasonings, the evidences, the intuitions of human nature can amount to real conviction—the real conviction of personal faith—that must be because there is something divine working behind and in their manhood. Miracles of themselves cannot convince. Reasonings of themselves cannot convince. No evidences can create faith. ‘No man can come unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.’ Faith always must be a divine gift—God’s disclosure of Himself. ‘Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.’

We pass a stage downwards in Church history. Still we find the Apostles teaching the same lessons of faith which they had themselves learnt. Everything, according to S. Paul, depends on faith. The salvation which the Church has to offer, it offers on the terms of faith and none other. It is not that the Church presumes to limit God’s freedom of working where He will and revealing Himself in His own time and way to every soul who, however blindly and ignorantly, yet really seeks Him. There is no final rejection of a soul, we know, except because it obstinately and finally refuses the light, and loves the darkness. But the Church has a Gospel to proclaim, an offer of God to publish, and this offer, this covenant of salvation, is made on no other terms than those of faith—faith conscious and deliberate in the person of Christ, a faith which is able to express itself in propositions. ‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’ Here is the necessity for faith in Christ which Christ Himself taught His Apostles, and the Apostles proclaim to the world. And the Church can never let that utterance die or diminish aught of its peremptory claim. ‘Dost thou believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God?’—so the Church must always cross-question her catechumen at the gate of baptism. Dost thou believe Him incarnate, crucified, risen, glorified—the Judge of all? If so, thou hast the secret of salvation. Thou, too, canst fall into the ranks of that mighty movement of redeemed humanity which, as it traverses the ages, follows the uplifted banner of the Cross; and when it would sing its hymn of human progress, recites instinctively the creed of the Apostle. S. Paul, like his Master, then, asserts the necessity of faith, and also its supernatural character. ‘No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.’ It is the same

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

truth that we learnt from our Lord. There is in the apostolic age, in place of Christ's miracles and words, the apostolic witness, firm, unhesitating, unanimous, that they had seen the risen Lord. There is the simple strength of apostolic teaching, the record of what they saw and touched and handled of the Word of Life. There is the evidence of miracle still among men. There is the moral argument of souls converted, and sins forgiven, and lives sanctified. But not all these taken together can produce faith; over and above these, and giving the meaning to these, must be that inner movement of God's good Spirit in the heart of man—the inner movement welcomed and acted upon so that it takes effect in the courage of self-committal, the courageous profession of the name of Christ. No man can really profess His name—'no man,' in real knowledge of what his words mean, 'can say Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.'

These old lessons are what we again and again must learn and re-learn, and lay to heart. Faith is necessary—that first—if we would share the Christian hope and life. What genuineness there is in Thomas Carlyle's protest against attempts to sustain the pain and courage of men by unreal appeals to Christian language emptied of its meanings. They would have comforted him after his wife's death by the vaguely-used phrase, 'In My Father's house are many mansions.' 'Yes,' he said, 'if you were God, you might have had the right to say so; but if you are man, what do you know more than I or any others of us?' In very truth Jesus Christ had 'brought life and immortality to light.' He had raised what was at first a dim hope of immortality into a certain expectation, a secure conviction, so that eternity becomes the recognised scale on which we Christians are to calculate our life and to estimate what is and what is not worth doing. But He has done this only because, as manifested Son of God, He reveals with secure knowledge the things of eternity, and because, as Son of Man, the revealer of man's true capacity and destiny, He was Himself raised from the dead to die no more. 'If Christ be not raised, your hope is vain.'

II. And, again, faith is supernatural. That means it is the gift of God, not the result of the mere action of our own faculties. It is only to say this—in other words, to say that evidences and proofs never can reach the point of creating faith. Evidences can justify faith and support it, and show it to be rational. They cannot produce it. Such evidences we have in our own generation in quite fresh force and power, for our New Testament documents have passed through a critical sifting and analysis of the most stringent and thorough sort in the fifty years that lie behind us. From such sifting we have learnt much about the process through which our New Testament documents took their present shape. We have been obliged to alter,

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

in a certain measure, current opinions about one or two of them, more or less ; but in all that is material we feel that this critical investigation has only reassured us in asserting the historical truth of the records on which our Christian faith rests. I may express this in two ways : first, by saying that this critical investigation enables us to assert with better grounds of assurance than ever before that the Christ of our four gospels, the miraculous Christ, the Christ with His absolute divine claim, is the original Christ of history, as those beheld and bear witness to Him who had been educated in close intercourse with Him. We have better grounds of assurance than ever before that we have in the four gospels no late and vague tradition, but in very truth the Apostles' doctrine. We have better grounds of assurance than ever before that in S. Paul's epistles we have unmistakable and clear evidence of what the first Christians, with unanimity behind their differences, thought about Christ. The sifting of recent criticism enables us to call attention with fresh emphasis to the trustworthy character of the apostolic witness. In some ages testimony has been careless—so careless, so clouded with superstitious credulity, as to be practically valueless. But in the Apostles we have men who knew thoroughly the value of testimony, and what depended upon it, who bore witness to what they had seen, and, in all cases except the exceptional case of S. Paul, to what they had seen over a prolonged period of years—whose convictions about Christ had been gradually formed, in spite of much slowness of heart and even persistent unbelief in their own minds—formed also in the face of Sadducean scepticism and cynicism, and in the full consciousness of what would be said against them—formed into such irresistible strength and unanimity by the solid impress of irresistible fact that nothing could shake it in the individual or in the body.

III. There are two sorts of faith. There is the faith by which we come to believe, and there is the faith in which we Christians are meant to live. Both are supernatural—both, that is to say, are the work of God in us, though they correspond to different states of the Holy Spirit's activity ; for He works upon men to make them Christians, and He dwells, as in a temple, in the hearts of them who are already Christians. Thus, working upon men, He brings them to belief ; dwelling within them He sustains them in the highest sort of faith, habitual and actual, which is the consciousness of sonship. 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' This life of faith, this consciousness of sonship, is meant to be the normal life and consciousness of Christians. And yet, if even the Eternal Son in His manhood vouchsafed to enter so deep into the trials of the human spirit as to lose the enjoyment of the divine fellowship, the conscious illumination of the Father's presence, as to

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

cry, 'My God, My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?' surely we, too, must expect trial in our life of faith; how much the more so that in us, in ourselves, we have to deal not only with the weaknesses which belong to innocence, but with the obscuring of the things of faith which results inevitably from worldliness, and indolence, and impurity. Yes, depend upon it, we shall not find it always easy—we are not meant to find it easy—to keep up the life of faith, to 'endure as seeing Him who is invisible.' Always we need to remember that, as the creation, so also the sustaining, of the life of faith is a divine gift, and demands on our part a reverent waiting for the gift of the Divine Spirit. When argument, evidence, reasoning, experience, have done all that these human things can do, we shall always, at the last resort, find ourselves again prostrate simply before the throne of divine grace: 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.'

CANON GORE.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Baptism. The baptismal question is this: Whether we are
1 COR. vii. 14. baptized because we are the children of God, or whether we are the children of God because we are baptized; whether we are to understand thereby that we are made something which we were not before—magically and mysteriously changed—or, that we are made the children of God by baptism in the same sense that a sovereign is made a sovereign by coronation? The Apostle's argument is decisive and unanswerable: These children were the children of God because the children of one Christian parent.

Baptism Christians, yet no Christians. Baptized, yet unbaptized.
doth save. The prophet includes God's covenanted people with the
1 PETER. iii. 21. nations outside. A Church within the Church. An Israel within Israel (Rom. ii. 28, 29; Jer. ix. 26). All baptized unto Moses, yet not all saved. It is clear they stopped short at the external rite.

Baptism If we obey the Gospel; but if we walk contrary to the
verily precepts of it, our baptism is no baptism, and our
Profiteth Christianity is heathenism.
2 TIM. ii. 19.

Why did He not say: 'Ye are clean by baptism'? Because it is the word which cleanses in the water. Take away the word, and

ILLUSTRATIONS

what is the water? Add the word to the element, and it becomes a sacrament. Whence is this power of the water that it touches the body and the heart is cleansed? Whence, but because the word operates not merely in being spoken, but in being believed.

Baptized. Unto what were ye?

ACTS xix. 1-7. 1. Unto God the Father—then ye have received the adoption of sons;

2. Unto God the Son—then ye have redemption through His blood;

3. Unto God the Holy Ghost—then ye have become the temple of God.

Pharisees and Stoics. Start from different points, but end alike.

1. The Jewish Pharisee.

2. The Catholic Pharisee.

3. The Protestant Pharisee.

4. The Humanistic Pharisee.

The difference is great between them all, but the end is the same. They all converge to one point.

‘Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in **no case** enter the kingdom of heaven.’ (MATT. v. 20.)

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,		ROM. VI. 19-23.
GOSPEL,		S. MARK VIII. 1-9.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,		1 CHRON. XXI.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,		1 CHRON. XXII. OR 1 CHRON. XXVIII. TO VER 21.
SECOND LESSONS,	. . .	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

Encouragement to Christian Labour.

And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in. 1 CHRONICLES xvii. 3, 4.



WHEN the Jews had returned from the Babylonish captivity they were more anxious for the rearing and adorning their own houses than for restoring the house of the Lord. For this they were sternly reproved by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, who were then raised up by God. 'Is it time for you, O ye! to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?' was the indignant remonstrance—a remonstrance which showed that, having provided for themselves luxurious habitations, they cared nothing for the desolation in which the temple still lay. How different had been the conduct of David! It made him uneasy that there should be a palace for the king, and

COMPLETE SERMON

only a tent or a tabernacle for the Lord God of Hosts. The first verse of this chapter gives this simple but beautiful account of David: 'Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.' He felt reproached by the magnificence of his own residence; its stateliness covered him with confusion of face when he thought how the ark was lodged—the ark that was the symbol of the presence of God, and that contained such mysterious and sacramental treasures. And so righteous seemed the purpose on David's part, to which this train of thought would necessarily lead—the purpose of building a temple—that Nathan the prophet did not hesitate to approve and encourage it, directing the monarch to proceed forthwith with his pious design. 'Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart, for God is with thee.' But even a prophet may speak unadvisedly. Nathan seems to have followed the suggestions of his own mind without waiting to ascertain what God's will might be, and our text tells us that the very same night the prophet was directed by God to go to David with a distinct prohibition, desiring him to abandon his purpose of erecting the temple. Not that God disapproved of David's design; on the contrary, as you elsewhere read, He honoured it with His commendation. But as David, from his youth, had been much engaged in wars, God said unto him, 'Thou shalt never build an house for My name.' It seemed not fitting that the sanctuary of the God of Peace should be reared by hands that had been often stained with blood, even though (for this was actually the case with David) it was the blood of those that deserved to have been doomed to die. What a sacredness, then, must there be in the temple of the Lord! How should they who in any way assist in the building of the temple see to it that they keep themselves free not only from actual defilement but from its very appearance. 'Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.' It is no light thing to minister at the altar, or to take part in dispensing the ordinances of religion. The wars that left no stain upon David's character, whether as a man or a monarch, yet disqualified him from the high and glorious work of rearing the house in which the Almighty might dwell. And that it was not in anger at any part of David's conduct that God withheld him from the glorious design, is evident from the soothing and gracious assurances that accompanied the prohibition. The temple was to be built, and God caused David to be told that though he might not build it himself, his son Solomon, who succeeded him, should be intrusted with the honourable work, and should live to see its glorious completion. And yet if you think that David was full

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

of zeal for the glory of God, eager to employ the declining years of his life in rearing a structure worthy in some measure to receive the ark, you will greatly doubt, whatever the soothing character of the prohibition, and whatever the intimation with which it was accompanied, whether it could have been without a feeling of regret and a sense of pain that David received from Nathan the message contained in our text, 'Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build Me an house to dwell in.'

I. Before we proceed further to examine the conduct of David, let us observe that it may often happen that what passes as zeal for the glory of God has itself no small mixture of self-seeking. It might be putting us to great trial if when some work were in hand in which we might be taking a leading part we were suddenly bidden to retire out of sight; not, indeed, to cease from having anything to do with it, but to co-operate in secret, striving for its promotion, but leaving others to enjoy the credit of overcoming the difficulties, and of accomplishing the design. It might be we should discover that we were greatly sustained in our endeavours by the consciousness of acting in a public character, and that when the question came whether we can still do the work and leave to others the applause, there would be a cooling down of our eagerness, which would too plainly prove us deficient of the 'single eye' which is so greatly a characteristic of the devout Christian. And here is the peril to which David was exposed. With a mind set upon a great and glorious work, a work with which it could hardly fail but that the names of the people engaged would be prominently and honourably associated, he is suddenly prohibited to enter on the work. He is told that it should be accomplished by another; that though designed by himself, another should have the honour of building a house for the Lord of Hosts. How, then, did David behave under circumstances that must have been painful and mortifying? Forced to give up the purpose of building the temple, and therefore losing the distinction that would arise from taking the lead in so noble a work, did he altogether abandon the design, determining that, if another should have the honour that other should also have the labour? Ah! this might too probably have been the case with too many amongst ourselves, but David's zeal for the glory of God was a zeal that could bear the test that is so hard for human selfishness. Forbidden to build the temple, and yet told that the temple should be built, he forthwith turns himself to the essential task of providing materials for the structure. He empties the quarries of his kingdom in amassing precious stones, and what he could accumulate from more private sources he carefully reserves and similarly consecrates. Hear his own account: 'Now I have prepared with all my might, for the

COMPLETE SERMON

house of my God, the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones and stones to be set, glistening stones and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones and marble stones in abundance.' And all this besides what he had prepared from his own private resources. Ah! the greatest feeling in the mind of David was evidently what he expressed before enumerating these costly preparations. 'The palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.' He seems to have lost sight, in a great sense, of the builder, and to have kept sight only of Him for whom the building was to rise.

II. What a lesson—what an example for us! I do not know that in any particular of his history is David more admirable than in this. It would have been so natural, knowing that the glorious work he had planned was to be taken out of his hands and committed to another—it would, I say, have been so natural for him to have given up the thing, and left the execution of it to his successor, that I cannot sufficiently extol the strength, the sincerity, the fervency of the piety that could labour as energetically and provide as magnificently for the structure in which he was not allowed to lay a stone, as though he had been assured of seeing it rise, and of having his own name connected with it to the remotest ages. Let us examine and judge ourselves, for it may be we are condemned by so disinterested a zeal.

Is it enough for us that God's glory is promoted? Is it comparatively unimportant to us what agency God may be pleased to employ? Nay, but these questions do not go deep enough. The true thing that is meant is, not being employed, but being employed without acknowledgment. Are we, then, content to be in the background, while others stand in prominent places, to bear the brunt of the toil, though our labours will pass unrecognised by our fellow-men? Now, it were idle to deny that there is an *éclat* about many pious undertakings which greatly helps to swell the number of the builders. There is all the difference between building the temple whose gorgeousness of architecture shall fix the admiration of the world, and labouring painfully in the carrying and heaping together the stones. The first was the part assigned to Solomon; there remained only the second to David. And whether he would have had few or many imitators among ourselves, there can be no doubt that it put his sincerity sternly to the test when the monarch had to choose between doing nothing and doing what would only augment his successor's renown. And because David decided so promptly, because, as one in whom every feeling was merged in the desire of honouring the Lord, he threw himself with such

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

earnestness into the work of providing materials for the temple, we hold him up for your admiration and imitation. We beseech you to consider how far sympathy with the éclat of which we have been speaking may be needful to keep you braced to enterprises for the glory of God, in what manner would your zeal keep its fervency were there no acting on a public stage, and nothing like distinction attached itself to pious and benevolent works. And then, that you may be stimulated by example, I ask you whether David seemed as truly, as spiritually, great, with the head of Goliath in his hand, when he had vanquished the Philistine, or when the skirt of Saul's robe showed how he had spared his enemy, as when the massive heaps of gold and silver, the jewels and precious stones, declared how he received the abrupt message of Nathan, 'Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build Me an house to dwell in.'

III. But it is altogether a different view which we are about to take of the historic facts to which your attention has been drawn. Without presuming to say that the facts were destined to have a typical character, they yet show an important feature of the dealings of God, which I think can hardly fail to prove that we should treat them as having the nature of parable. There is many a temple as that built by Solomon, but for which the materials were provided by David. In other words, and as a more general observation, it is the frequent, if not the invariable, ordaining of God, that one party is empowered to commence, and another to complete the work of moral renewal through which men are builded together for the habitation of God through the Spirit. The true Christian is a living temple of the Almighty; and not so noble in the eyes of the angelic creation was that sanctuary that made Jerusalem the glory of the earth as is the believer in Christ, reared on that foundation which God laid in Zion, and dwelt in by the Holy Ghost, who is continually purifying the inmost recesses. But how is this living temple ordinarily erected, through what processes, by what agency? In no case, indeed, is the work a human work. Born as we all are in sin, with a depraved nature, and affections alienated from God, it can never be through other than spiritual means that an individual undergoes that change in the spirit of his mind which fits him for the kingdom of heaven. The temple—if temple it may be called before there has been applied to it the power of the Most High—the temple is utterly in ruins, and it surpasses all finite ability to construct out of the defaced and desecrated habitation a residence for Him who is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity. But whilst the repairing and renewing influence must come wholly from above, there is the employment of finite instrumentality. God works by means. He has been pleased to appoint certain ordinances, and

COMPLETE SERMON

He makes use of certain agencies, that He may form fallen man into a habitation for Himself. When, in obedience to the command and institution of our blessed Redeemer, the child is baptized, then the temple undergoes its first and great transformation. It is then, as we believe, entered by the Holy Ghost, whose influence has only to be carefully and scrupulously cherished, and it will gradually insinuate itself into the stones themselves, and cement them together, so that the Christian graces being acquired and matured, the character advances daily towards closer conformity with the image of God. In the majority of cases, however, the Holy Spirit, as received in baptism, is not thus sedulously cherished from the first. The regenerate person, adopted into the heavenly family, wanders away like the prodigal son from his father's house. The walls, which had received a celestial guard, are found to give harbourage to an unclean troop, till the Spirit, wearied and almost quenched, is perhaps on the point of withdrawing altogether and abandoning the scene of desolation and death. Thus, then, it is that there has to pass a great change over numbers whom we may affirm to have been already regenerate—born again of water by the Holy Ghost; this is the change of *conversion*—the change undergone by the baptized person when he is brought to consider his ways, to remember the vows he has so long neglected, and the privileges he has so long let sleep, and when, through repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, he enters on a new life and devotes himself visibly to the making sure his election and calling. And because this change in conversion is so marked and apparent, therefore it is often confounded with regeneration, or substituted for it; whereas, in strict truth, the person could not have been converted had he not been regenerated, even as the prodigal could not have turned homewards had he not been a son.

IV. But as to this change of conversion, what instrumentality does God ordinarily employ in bringing back to Himself those whom He had adopted into His family, but who have perversely gone astray, and are in danger of perishing? It is here, in answer to this question, that we have an illustration in the facts that have been considered in the history of the first temple. The prayers and instructions of parents, the warnings of friends, the exhortations of ministers, the dealings of Providence, these, spread, it may be, over a long course of years, are generally made use of to reclaim the wanderer, to excite in him solicitude for his soul, to bring him to the Redeemer, through whom alone that soul can escape the bitter pains of everlasting death. It is not commonly effected at once by any single and solitary act, though there may be all the appearance of sudden transformation, the man being changed as if by

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

direct and divine interposition, so that from having 'wrought all uncleanness with greediness,' he forthwith labours to 'live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.' There has generally been a long process carried on. Many agencies have been at work. The seed has been sown, and has taken root unperceived in the heart. Remonstrances, which at the time appeared utterly thrown away, have gained a hold upon the memory, waiting a season when they may be stirred up, and force an audience from the sinner. Supplications, which, in spite of every discouragement, have continued to ascend in behalf of the wanderer, have not been unheeded by God, though He has given no answer in the shape the prayers desired; so that when at last the blessed change of conversion takes place, it may, indeed, apparently result from some one sermon or some one startling occurrence, or some one mysterious question; but the sermon, or the occurrence, or the suggestion, has more probably been but the last of a series, each of which has done something towards preparing the way for the great work of renewal. Thus is verified what our Lord affirmed to the disciples in regard to their labours in His cause—'Herein is that saying true, One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour; other men laboured, and ye have entered into their labours.' This must be as applicable to us as to the disciples. Oh! if God honour us to the conversion of sinners, we do but enter into other men's labours, reaping what other men have sown. But then, on the very same principle, if we enter into other men's labours, other men shall enter into ours. As they who have gone before us have shared in our successes, we too shall have shared in the successes of those who follow us. And there is a wonderful encouragement to parents and guardians and ministers in this doctrine of the transmission of labour. It were a disheartening thing to think that all the toil, of which there is no visible result, is largely thrown away, seeing that the brother whom we strive earnestly to turn from the error of his ways may not be turned from them till many years have elapsed, and then through some instrumentality different from ours; to think that he shall derive no benefit from our zeal, our efforts, and our prayers. But, on the contrary, it is a most cheering thing to think that all we are enabled to do tells on the desired, though distant, consummation; and that, if the time indeed arrive when the poor wanderer shall be brought back to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, we may be in the grave and long ago forgotten, and yet our efforts shall have contributed to the reclaiming him from evil; ay, and it may be, there is nothing to prove it either impossible or improbable, had our endeavours been less hearty, less assiduous, never would the sheep have returned to the fold, gladdening unspeakably the hearts of the immediate

COMPLETE SERMON

agents in his conversion, and causing joy in the presence of the angels of God. Consider, then, that though you may not visibly bring men to God, you may be preparing the way for their being brought to Him by others. You may not be allowed to build the temple, but you may be preparing the materials with which another shall build.

And is this nothing? Will not this encourage you to persevere, although they for whose conversion you labour are still apparently set against returning to God? Will you count it vain to continue remonstrating, warning, exhorting, praying, because, so far as you can judge, no good is effected, now that you are made acquainted with this principle in the divine dealings, 'One soweth and another reapeth, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together?' Let us see to it that we be not weary in well-doing. Preachers are not preaching in vain, so long as they preach faithfully and affectionately. Parents are not praying in vain whilst they pray earnestly on behalf of their children. I know not, indeed, that either the preachers or the parents will live to be gladdened by the conversion of the objects of their deep solicitude. Nay, I know not that the contrary will ever take place, though I do know that no labour can be lost which is labour for God, and that prayer for another, if it prevail not to his benefit, returns into our own bosoms, bringing blessings on ourselves. But if the party for whom so much has been done, and been done to all appearance in vain, be ever brought to repentance and faith, then have I all the assurance which a known principle in God's dealings warrants, or rather demands, that sermons delivered long years before, and prayers uttered by those who shall perhaps have been long asleep in the grave, will have all done their part towards so blessed a change. The departed or the dead shall be fellow-workers with the honoured individuals who may seem the single instruments in translating a soul from darkness into marvellous light. Therefore do we call upon all who have the souls of others committed to their care—and who has not, who may not, who shall not strive to extend the kingdom of Christ?—we call on them to persevere in the face of discouragements. Therefore do we propose to them David as an example, and fetch from the building of the first temple illustrations of the principle which should keep them in heart. Do you as David did. If you cannot know with as much certainty as David did that another shall build the temple, at least you are not as sure as he was that you may not be permitted to build it yourselves. Go on, then, providing the materials. Go on in faith, storing up what, if you are not allowed to see wrought into a sanctuary, may yet be so employed at the time fixed by God. And be the gold and the silver and the onyx stones and the marbles—that

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

is, exhortation, warning, reproof, and supplication—be these the evidences that you do not despair of the temple being built, even if you should of your being the builders. Be the David if you are not the Solomon, and animate yourselves with the thought that Solomon might not have finished his magnificent work had David been disheartened with the message, ‘Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build Me an house to dwell in.’

V. There is so strong a disposition to count labour lost when we are not permitted to see its fruits and to know its results, that few scriptural lessons are more valuable than those that bid us cast our bread upon the waters, and that cheer us with the promise that if we do so we shall behold it after many days. Such lessons are specially valuable at the commencement of a new year, when we naturally review the labours and successes of the past. The great characteristic of the present dispensation is, that we walk by faith, not by sight. And no doubt we frequently set aside this characteristic when we make the probability, much more when we make the certainty, of success the motive to exertion. Our part is simply to labour at what God has commanded, the event being with him, and only the duty with us. Still, though we are to walk in faith, there may be, and there is, much to encourage our faith. In compassion to our infirmities, God has graciously given us many promises and intimations, that should suffice to keep us diligent when otherwise there would be the least to make us hopeful. Amongst such promises and intimations we may certainly reckon the principles of which we have found an illustration in the present subject of discussion, that in spiritual things the sowing is ordinarily with one party and the reaping with another. Solomon builds the temple, and David provides the materials.

We admit, indeed, that the case of David differs from that of any preacher or labourer among ourselves, in that he had a distinct promise that the temple should be built, as well as a distinct intimation as to who should be the builder. We have neither the one nor the other. We cannot be sure either that the temple shall be built or that our hands shall be thus employed in the structure. There may thus be greater call for faith than in the instance of David, but there is no such difference in the case as to make the example of David inappropriate to ourselves. If he had more to encourage him in the certainty that another would build it, we have less to discourage us, in that it is not certain that we shall not build it. Henceforward, then, let the temple of Solomon be an object of frequent contemplation; not because of its massive architecture and gorgeous adornments, nor because even of its having typified the one Mediator between God and man, but rather on account of its exhibiting in its glory and

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

pathless forests of time the law of cause and effect; at one moment it promises an answer, and then seems to elude you, luring you on till you come to the edge of the precipice of eternity; and there, where science cannot go, on the throne of the universe, is the first and ultimate cause of all things—God. But the scientist says, you can go no farther than the edge of the precipice—your long search has ended in disappointment; and the Agnostic, after deepest and most toilsome investigation, has to say his *de profundis*.

II. Our Lord answered the question when, in a similar miracle to that in the Gospel for to-day, He said to the representatives of His Church, 'Give ye them to eat' (S. Matthew xiv. 16); and thus by a miracle enabled them to feed the multitude.

1. He answered it when He said, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled' (S. Matthew v. 6). Yes, after righteousness, that is, after Christ, for He is 'The Lord our Righteousness.'

2. In the Gospel it was those who were fasting from the world's food whom our Lord fed, and there must first be a realisation of a sense of famine, that the food of the world cannot satisfy the soul. It was not until there was a famine in their land that Joseph's brethren were driven to him (Genesis xlv. 4-8)

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

Four Thousand Men to be fed in the Wilderness.

From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

S. MARK viii. 4.

THE difficulty urged by the disciples is one not of bygone times only. It is a difficulty arising from numbers, and it is a difficulty arising from place.

I. The difficulty arising from mere numbers is one which presses heavily from time to time upon the mind of a nation and of a church.

I would draw from this part of the subject one earnest question for ourselves, as to our own reception, and as to our interest in the reception by others, of that which we profess to regard as a living and life-giving food. What should we have thought if the disciples themselves had refused on this occasion to accept their Lord's miraculous gift? if they had said, It is of no use: seven loaves can never feed four thousand men; I will take no part in diminishing by my act a provision so paltry; still less will I mock the hungry multitude before me by taking any part in the delusive ceremony of ministering to them of this scanty store? The least we expect of the disciples is their own faith, their own obedience. If the prospect is dis-

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

couraging, it must not be made more so by the faithlessness of the faithful: they at least must eat of Christ's bread and assist Him in the distribution (so far as it will go) to others. To fold the hands because discouragements are many is to play the traitor to His cause whose servants, whose disciples, perhaps whose ministers and messengers we are. Let us by an earnest and real communion strengthen ourselves out of His exhaustless fulness! Let us press around Him with all eagerness, eat ourselves of the living bread, and drink ourselves of the living water! And then see whether He will not also use us as His distributors; whether He will not give to one a little loaf, to another a morsel broken off from it to carry to another soul that needs! See whether now and then there may not be given to one and to another some token for good in ministering to his brethren within his own doors and also without them, enough to encourage if not enough to elate, redounding to his Saviour's glory, if also (as is probable) to the humiliation and downfall of pride and self!

II. We have spoken of the difficulty arising from numbers, from the disproportion between the men to be fed and the materials for their supply. We have to think also of the difficulty arising from the place, from the disparity between the scene which was before them and the food which was wanted. Bread here in the wilderness.

When we apply this to spiritual things, two remarks will suggest themselves.

1. There is an apparent contrariety between heavenly supplies and our earthly condition. We are here in a wilderness. We would not exaggerate the trials of life; we would not be unthankful for life's many blessings. But it is no exaggeration to say that here we have no continuing city; it is no unthankfulness to say that here we have no entire satisfaction. To some of us more than to others, but to all in some degree, life is a time of unsettlement and of unrest. Some of us have had experience of its strippings and of its uprootings; of its changes, its separations, its lonelineses, its sorrows. And some of us have had experience of its disappointments, its fallacious prospects, its blighted hopes, its broken promises. Now this sort of experience of life makes us almost suspicious of an offer of happiness. When Christ stands in the midst of us, and says, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest,' we are almost ready to say, 'Can a man be satisfied with bread here in the wilderness? Shall God prepare a table in the wilderness? Can He give bread also here below, and provide real food for His people?' There is an incongruity between the place and the promise. Rest in a changing world, happiness in a troublous world—the ideas are inharmonious and discordant.

2. Finally, and with especial reference to the service of Holy

OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

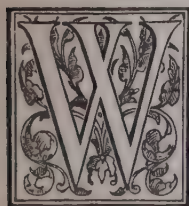
Communion, I would remark that there is an apparent incongruity between outward elements and spiritual grace, between the food of the body and the food of the soul. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper we are invited to eat bread and drink wine in this holy place ; and to an act thus in itself common we are taught to annex a special spiritual promise. It has occurred, I doubt not, to many minds, How can this bread of the wilderness satisfy man's soul ? How can I derive spiritual nourishment from natural supplies ? The answer is that which met the question also of the text. From whence can a man be thus satisfied ? From the word and will, from the act and living grace, of Christ. He multiplied the seven loaves, so that they fed four thousand men. He uses the sacramental bread so as to make the food of the body minister to the soul. He takes the loaves and blesses and breaks them, gives them to His ministers, and they to His people, until all the believing have eaten and are satisfied, thank Him for His great goodness, and go on their way rejoicing.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

The Impotence of Numbers.

And David said to Joab, and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring the number to me that I may know it.
1 CHRONICLES xii. 2.



WHAT was it that made David's deed ungodly ? The answer is that it was a departure from the place he held in the kingdom of God. He was losing the heart which could make him say, 'I am small and of no reputation, yet do I not forget Thy commandments.' Judging by the remonstrances of David's candid friend, Joab, he was moved by the hope that he should find the people big enough to cope with the nations about them on their own ground. Had they armies ? So had he. He would hold his own on their terms. Could they fight ? So could Israel. The world around should know that Israel was not to be despised. And the people themselves would appear to have shared David's pride and ambition. They had prospered and were proud of their prosperity. David's proposal was likely enough to be popular among the Israelites. They had now settled in the land. They would realise their material

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

strength. Once they were a horde of freshly emancipated slaves. Now, a fixed people, they would let their reserve of strength be known. God might have given them in the past strange and unlikely victories; now they felt their feet, and would stand of their own strength. David must needs be assured of the resources of his kingdom, and the sum-total would be a proud reckoning for the people.

I. Now, such a mood, such a ranging of himself with neighbouring powers, was a grievous departure from David's position as king of a chosen race. He might not have known what it was then, but he had to be taught. We can see what kings and prophets could not. Think for a moment how unique that race was. Nothing is more wonderful, or so wonderful, in history as the survival of the Jews. They were set in the midst of mighty nations which far outnumbered them, but which all lost their place and power in the world while the Jews remained. The Egyptians failed to destroy them; so did the Assyrians. The Babylonians, the mighty Persians, who overran Egypt itself, came and went; and after their power had risen and fallen, the Jews remained. Other great nations of the Gentile world rose and fell; Greeks and Romans left the Jews as they were found. They were wonderfully preserved, though through external force, internal discord and disobedience, they ought, by all the rules which have determined the fate of peoples, to have disappeared, gone to pieces, again and again.

There is nothing like it in the history of the world. Here was a peculiar people destined not to multiply (for the number of Jews now is reckoned to be not much greater than it was in David's time), but to survive with incredible vitality, and at length to produce One to whom men should flock from the ends of the earth, who should spread His kingdom from shore to shore, not by the sword, but by the word of truth. That process is going on. We are familiar with what we call 'missionary' work. Those engaged in it frequently come to us from the two hemispheres. Men in our midst bear witness to the propagation of Christianity, which, if it be not so swift as we might hope, is still in some shape a growing power and influence among men. This most wonderful phenomenon appears. Think of it. One strain or thread of the human race, small and obscure compared with the nations around it, often trampled on in the march of history, has yet survived all the great powers of the ancient world. This in itself is most notable. But more is to be noticed. It has remained, in one sense, stationary, and yet it has given birth to the most widely penetrating body upon earth, the manifold Church of Christ. This cannot be disproved. The Christian Church came from nowhere unless it came out of the Jewish. Nay, to this very hour it sets up the law of Sinai in its

OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

churches, it reads the Jewish Bible in its congregation, it sings the Jewish psalms in its worship. Its cradle and nursery was Jerusalem. Its first Apostles and teachers were all Jews. Its Head was a Jew Himself. And though the old Jewish community does not proselytise, its child, the Christian Church, does, with accumulating energy. In some shape it is the conspicuously aggressive teacher of religion on the face of the globe, setting itself to indoctrinate and convert every nation upon earth, from the simple Indians of the farthest West to the oldest idolaters and philosophers of the East. It has had its rises and falls, but that is the spectacle which it presents. It has had its failures; it has stood and striven long, with sometimes a seeming hopelessness, against the thick walls of Oriental paganism, but it has never drawn back; its unconquered and stubborn heart beats with desire and intention to go on in a belief that after His own way, and in His own time, the uplifted Christ will draw all men unto Him. And the whole of this mighty growth has sprung from a small race which reaches like a thread through the great historical fabrics of the past, and, though they have crumbled around it, has not been broken.

Now look back, and notice how in the early days of this race they were in danger of being spoiled, and really degraded, by an attempt to set themselves on the level of the nations around. David's act was a forgetfulness of, a departure from, God's purpose. In seeking to realise his material resources, and count the swords which he could draw, he so far gave up that unseen vital force which distinguished his people the most, and descended to the meaner level on which those around him took their stand.

That is the leading lesson set by David's numbering of the people. Beneath the abundant and bewildering imagery which surrounds or overlies the record, that is the original and everlasting truth which it contains.

II. The whole scene is no mere vision of poetical beauty terrible in the realism of its imagery, but it reveals the very centre of divine life. It shows the secret of the Lord, and declares how that there is a power often hidden, but never dead, which fulfils its purpose with finally irresistible force. In the preservation of the Jews and the development of Christianity, which traces its pedigree up to the Jewish Church, we see a process which David ignored when he tried to range himself with the nations around, who were about to shrink or disappear.

But this is not the only lesson to be learned from the chapter we have heard to-day. It points to some of those mistakes which men are apt to make at all times in the conduct of their society and their lives.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Of course I refer to a reliance on numbers as a guarantee of stability and truth. I am not thinking of war alone. People say that God is on the side of the greatest battalions. It may seem to be so for a while, but decisive battles in history have been won against tremendous odds, and the courage of the individual soldier often counts more than the multitude of a host.

It is, however, in national economy, and most especially in religion, that faith in mere numbers may prove to be disastrous. The consent and unanimity of a thousand fools does not render the folly of one man harmless. On the contrary, it may arm it with power to do a thousandfold more harm. In these days, perhaps, we should be specially cautious in guiding our course by that weathercock, public opinion. No doubt it shows us which way the wind blows, and indicates the presence of numbers, but the question remains, In which direction does it blow, and how long will it last? The mariner does not sail before the wind unless it drives him towards the haven where he would be. Sometimes he has to beat up against a steady breeze; and it is only by keeping his intended course in mind that he makes good use of the wind he feels. But some pursue a zigzag path without any reference to a point at which they continually aim. They yield to the claim of sheer numbers, sometimes sailing in one direction, sometimes in another. Be sure that the radical mistake of David can be repeated in the conduct of many a modern nation, and is most likely to be mischievous when it is led by mere party government.

No persuasion may be taken as true because it is accepted even by all. There was a time when the whole world believed that the sun moved round the earth. Nay, the Church was ready to assert it as a divine truth, and to condemn any one who questioned it. But was it the less false because, for a while, the universal suffrage of mankind was in its favour? The great convictions and changes in history are irrespective of numbers. They come like little seeds which spread until they cover the land. Again, a man who really gets hold of a truth is not more persuaded of it when it has been accepted by others. He is pleased, but not dependent on the verdict which they pass. And a man who has not embraced a particular statement, but wants to see how it is received before he commits himself, can hardly be said to be convinced. He has no root in himself, being merely the slave of numbers.

That slavery, worse than Egyptian, has arisen again and again in the world's course. It shows itself in the discharge of our business and the profession of our faith up to these last days. It is the deadly hindrance to which David exposed himself and his people. He, for a while, lost sight of the Lord of truth and righteousness.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

For a time he forgot His works and the wonderful things which He had done.

And so we are all tempted in the formation of our opinions and the doing of our work. We are all tempted to number the people. When we would be secure in the possession of a thought we are too often drawn to ask only, 'What do others think?'

But it is of the first importance that a man should be, and do, what he is, and does, divinely, that he should be true to himself, to the voice of his Father which is in heaven, but who never leaves His children to walk alone if they will only take His hand.

Then the man is in the way of salvation, which does not depend upon numbers, and is untouched by war, pestilence, and famine. He is in relation to the Lord of all power and might, the Author and Giver of all good things.

PREBENDARY HARRY JONES.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

Divine Guidance.

He led them forth by a right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

PSALM cvii. 7.



OUR danger and our deliverance are here brought forward. They are represented under four striking images. (1) Of travellers lost in a wilderness, but directed and conducted home; (2) Of prisoners confined in a dungeon, and then rescued from their captivity; (3) Of persons oppressed with sickness, and almost miraculously recovered; (4) Of sailors tossed to and fro, and up and down, in a storm at sea, and afterwards brought safely into haven. At the end of each of these four descriptions of danger and of deliverance there comes in the animating exhortation, which is the keynote of the whole psalm, 'O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!'

I shall not ask you to consider the other three figures, or the psalm at large, but I shall beg you to notice the first similitude only: I mean that of travellers lost in the wilderness, but afterwards directed and conducted to their home. 'He led them forth by a right way,

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

that they might go to a city of habitation.' We are to speak, you will remember, only of God's redeemed people.

I. Notice their journey home.

Their journey is a perilous, but after all it is a safe journey. And it is a safe journey for two reasons :

1. They are led by God.

2. They are led aright.

II. Their home.

1. Its nature. This home is variously described in God's Word.

Sometimes it is called a kingdom. 'Fear not, little flock ; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' Sometimes it is called a house. 'In My Father's house are many mansions.' The Psalmist here calls it a city—'a city of habitation.' 'He led them forth by a right way that they might go to a city of habitation.' Here upon earth we have not a city of habitation—a city which we can inhabit—a city which we can for any certain time dwell in. Here upon earth we are not at home. We often speak of going to our homes, when we are going to the houses in which we live. But how quickly does the place which once knew us know us no more ! How soon do events transpire which remove us from that abode to some other dwelling. Here, therefore, we have no continuing city. We are but strangers and wanderers ; and we put up with many inconveniences by the way, because we feel that at present we must expect these things, and that ere long we shall be freed from all these troubles. You all know that in a town or city there are comforts which are not to be had in a village—and still more in a wilderness, or on a fell-top. And such will be heaven. It is a city, where the inhabitants shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun smite them by day, nor the moon by night. In other words, in heaven all our wants will be fully supplied.

2. Its perpetuity. How long is it to last ? It is to last for ever. 'It is a city of habitation.' Other cities have flourished and have decayed and come to nought. Where is Babylon, that sat like a lady among the kingdoms, with its broad walls, its hanging gardens, and its stately edifices ? All are in ruins. The bittern and the cormorant are the only inhabitants of the swamp in which its gorgeous palaces once reared their lofty heads. Where too are Tyre and Sidon, and Capernaum, and Chorazin, and Bethsaida ? A few shattered pillars and a few ruined arches are all that remain. Earthly cities, therefore, are not to be compared with our city which is on high. Those cities, whose streets once swarmed with playing children, are now silent as the grave, without inhabitants. But our city is, as our text tells us, 'a city of habitation.' And when will it cease to be a city of habitation ? Never. This city, we read, 'hath foundations' ;

ILLUSTRATIONS

that is, its foundations are fixed on a rock—the rock of God's immovable truth. It is an 'inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away.' Those habitations our Lord tells us are 'everlasting habitations.'

C. CLAYTON.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

A great sinner. LUTHER says to Satan, 'In telling me that I am a great sinner, thou givest me a sword to cut thine own throat; for Christ died for sinners.'

Feeding the five thousand. Noticed by all the Evangelists. It was a desert place, to which

S. MARK viii. 1. 1. S. Matthew = Jesus withdrew, after hearing of John the Baptist's death, seeking solitude, and to reflect on His own approaching end.

2. S. Mark = 'Come and rest a while' to the disciples after their mission—there were so many coming and going, that they had no leisure.

3. S. Luke = That our Lord wished for private conversation with His disciples after their return from the mission, and the desert was the more suitable place.

4. S. John = It was the time of the Passover. Jesus could not visit Jerusalem because of the growing hatred; therefore they would have a Passover here in the desert place, for there was a hungry multitude.

Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	ROM. VIII. 12-17.
GOSPEL,	S. MATT. VII. 15-21.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	1 CHRON. XXIX. 9-29.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	2 CHRON. I. or 1 KINGS III.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

The Insufficiency of Nominal Discipleship.

Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. MATT. vii. 21.



THESE words, I apprehend, are familiar to us not merely as the closing words of to-day's gospel, but also from their place (at least to some of us) among the offertory sentences in the communion service, where they stand like the cherubim with flaming swords at the gate of the garden to keep the way of the tree of life. They are, in fact, the opening words of the concluding and most solemn paragraph of our Lord's sermon on the mount—that paragraph in which He applies to all the subjects of the new kingdom what He had just been saying about the false prophets. By the false prophets he meant, no doubt, particular members of the scribe and Pharisee class who would have occurred to the minds of those whom He addressed, who were public characters at the time—men who seemed to be one thing and who were another. They came before the world in the garb of innocence—in sheep's clothing; they were

COMPLETE SERMON

inwardly destroyers of the peace and light of human souls—as our Lord expressed it, ravening wolves. If it was objected that they professed to do a great deal of good, our Lord replies that this profession must be tested by experience, for nature generally does not bear out the opinion that men can produce moral or spiritual work of a quality different from that of their real character. Experience points to a broad correspondence between what men do and what they are—between character and action; and therefore action is, upon the whole, a test, a true test, of character. The moral nature and the outward activity of man is just as much an organic whole as the trunk and the fruit of a tree. The fruit is the test of what the tree is. The false prophets might say what they pleased; their actions showed what they were. They were not better than they were because they could talk impressively on questions of duty. ‘Do men’—our Lord asked the question, adopting the words of a current proverb of the time—‘do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?’ ‘Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit. A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.’ Now, if our Lord had stopped at this point, the bulk of His hearers, and especially of those who had become, or were on the point of becoming, His disciples, would have gone home in high spirits and on good terms with themselves. It is very tolerable to most of us—very animating to a great many of us—to hear people, or classes of people, condemned for sins or inconsistencies which we have no chance of committing, to which we have no kind of temptation, and then to reflect how very shocking it is that there should be such sins and inconsistencies in the world we live in. Our Lord knew human nature too thoroughly to flatter one of the least amiable of its weaknesses; and He therefore proceeds to show that His disciples themselves, or many of them, might be in just the same moral condition as that of the false prophets. They might be men of profession without being strictly men of action—men of words, or, at best, men of feelings, without obedience. ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.’

And here it can scarcely be questioned that by ‘the kingdom of heaven’ our Lord means, at least in the first instance, the new spiritual society of men which He was on the point of establishing under that name upon the earth—a kingdom which, although of earth, so far as its scene and subjects were concerned, was to be of heaven in its principles, in its drift, in its spirit. He began His ministry by bidding men repent. Why? Because the kingdom of

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

heaven was at hand. He invited men to press into it. He said that it was like a net let down into the sea of humanity and enclosing fish of various kinds; that it was like a field in which many a tare would grow along with the wheat; and yet, though it was in the event to contain many who, while in it, would not be of it, there would be not a few drawn by various motives toward the person of the King who yet would never actually enter the kingdom. 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does not thus merely profess—he who does not merely feel—he who obeys what in this matter is the will of God—he that by formed habit (and therefore in this instance) doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.' Not that this exhausts the meaning of the solemn words. In its deepest sense the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of souls in the eternal world from which the weakness, the imperfections, which abound in the kingdom here are rigidly excluded. 'There shall in no wise enter into it (the heavenly city) anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.' The eternal kingdom which God has promised through Christ our Lord is clearly, we may dare to say, in Christ's own mind in the words which follow. 'Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name have done many wonderful works; and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.' Even great works done without charity, done without faith, done from ostentation, done for merely earthly ends, will be worse than worthless before the throne of Christ. This is a truth beyond that which is suggested by the text, but it shows the real power and force and reach of our Lord's words. Mere profession of adherence to Him, however reiterated, however enthusiastic, is to be no passport of entrance into the kingdom.

I. Now, see here the disinterestedness of our Lord's love for souls. He seeks men, not for His own sake, but for theirs. He had nothing to gain by their adhesion to His teaching, to His person, to the new society which He was on the point of setting up upon the earth. He was what He was, in His spotless purity, in His unassailable majesty, in His imperturbable repose, whether the Jewish people at the time followed Him or not; and if He asked men to come to Him, to follow Him, to give Him honour, trust, worship—and He did ask for these things and more—it was because the gift would benefit not Himself but the man who gave it. And this being so, it was of the first importance that those who did obey His call, since they did it for their own advantage and not for His, should do it simply, thoroughly—should practise no deceit upon themselves as they could practise none upon Him—should yield not merely the obedience of the lips but an

COMPLETE SERMON

obedience of the will, not an outward but an inward homage. Rather than accept professions of loyalty which were not thoroughly sincere, He would discourage advances, not of course finally, but for the moment. He would bid men think ere they made professions of which they might repent, or which they did not really mean. And so it happened that, when a person professed that he was ready to follow our Lord whithersoever He went, our Lord did not at once accept the profession; He merely said, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head,' as if He would say, 'Have you really reflected on all that this profession of yours means?' And when the sons of Zebedee, through their mother, asked that they might cast in their lot with Him, and have places of trust and honour in His kingdom, He asked them whether they were prepared to drink the cup that He would drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with. Had they considered what was meant by following the Crucified? And when the young ruler, a person evidently of much consideration, addressed Him in conventional language as 'Good Master,' our Lord said abruptly, 'Why callest thou Me good?' and then told him that he lacked the most important condition of discipleship. And when S. Peter, speaking for his brethren and himself, said out of the emotion of his heart, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life,' our Lord said, 'Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?' S. Peter, our Lord implied, was carried away by his enthusiasm. He might answer for himself: he had better not make professions for other persons of whose state before God he knew nothing. And when, on another occasion, great multitudes followed Him, He turned and said, that except a man hated brother and sister and wife and self for His sake, he could not be a disciple; as much as to say, 'Do you all really mean to make My service an object in life to which other things must give way?' And so, in the text, when, at the close of His sermon on the mount, the multitude around Him, entranced by the power of a teaching which they felt had a moral authority for which they looked in vain in the teaching of the scribes, were visibly willing to make protestations of attachment and of service, He observed solemnly, 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.'

II. Now, how different is this from what we meet in this world. A public man, for instance, who wishes to get into Parliament or to carry a measure there, says, 'Gentlemen, the one thing that I want is your support. What I look to is simply your votes, not your convictions. If you will return me, if you will support me, you may

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

think, feel, be, just what you like. The practical question is whether you will help me at the critical moment by your suffrages.' Now, this is natural enough, because politics are concerned not with individual character but with public measures. But then the same thing may be witnessed in some churches of Christ. When, for instance, a new doctrine about the infallibility of all the popes was suddenly imposed upon members of the Roman Catholic Church, and, as was perfectly natural, certain members of that church in high office said at first that they could not conscientiously believe what had never been taught to be a part of the Christian revelation before, it was practically said to them, 'What we want is your adhesion. You must not contradict publicly this new definition. We must present to the world a united front, and if you remain with us you must say what we do. The rest is a question for yourselves, upon which we do not enter.' And do we not hear sometimes very much the same thing nearer home? 'The idea of an established church,' it has been said, 'is to find a home for all the religious opinions which are entertained by the nation.' And, in accordance with this principle, what is asked for in these quarters is not loyalty to the revealed truth of Christ so much as practical attachment to the establishment. Men may think what they like about our Lord, about His atoning work, about holy Scripture, about the Sacraments, about the value of prayer, about the nature of repentance; but let them, before all things, deem it necessary to uphold the principle of an established church. It is not for me to underrate the blessings of an established church; but to ask support for it while professing indifference to the truths which it is its very purpose to represent is, with all serious minds, to do it the deepest and most lasting injury. After all, the faith of Christ does not exist for the purpose of justifying the existence of an established church: the church exists for the sake of teaching the faith of Christ. Mere support of an institution, combined with indifference to the truths which it represents, can only rest upon a class of motives which religion may not recognise, and is likely, in the long-run, to defeat the very object of its enthusiasm. How deep, how broad, is the difference between these estimates of the value of adhesion to a doctrine or an institution, and our Lord's. With Him the question is the good of the adherent, the good of the convert; with others, the strength of the institution. They ask, what is the support thus brought forth? He asks what is the sincerity of the act of adhesion? He would have simple integrity of purpose. They seek practical efforts or professions such as will have weight with the world. They are thinking of what meets the eye, of the present, of the material; He of that which is beyond the ken of sense, of the interests of the human spirit, of the eternal world.

COMPLETE SERMON

III. 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord.' To what persons or what classes of persons does He refer? We can scarcely doubt that He does refer to some *bonâ fide* hypocrites; that is, men who consciously acted a part, who professed what they did not mean or feel. Such there would have been even among the first disciples. Certainly the temptations to hypocrisy would then have been few and slight. A man did not gain anything by discipleship, commonly speaking. For at least three hundred years after Christ it was in no sense worth a man's while to be a Christian unless a man felt certain that Christianity was true. Our Lord, however, speaks not merely of those who heard Him, but with a prophetic foresight to all the ages of His Church. And even among the first disciples all were not true men. Of the twelve whom He had chosen, one, He Himself said, was a devil. When our Lord was being hailed as a great teacher and deliverer by the populations of Galilee, there was, even then, room for hypocrisy in its rudest sense. Judas had the common purse in his keeping, and was thus tied down by a powerful motive of self-interest to an insincere profession. At particular times in history the temptation to hypocrisy of this coarse kind has been particularly strong, and has been largely yielded to. One such period was the reign of Louis the Fourteenth in France, when, in order to attain to any post of influence whatever, it was necessary to be of the religion of the court. The consequence was the growth of characters such as Molière described, Tartuffes of many types in many ranks of society. And another period was that of the Puritan ascendancy in England, after the defeat and death of Charles the First. Men found it useful, in order to get on in the army or in Parliament, to use scriptural phrases in their ordinary conversation, to affect a particular tone of voice; and these things were taken for marks of godliness and conversion. The result was the licence and indifference which followed the Restoration, just as the hollow professions of the days of the great French monarch led on to the laxity of the following reign, to the infidelities and blasphemies of the Revolution. And in the same way, we may often observe the children who have been carelessly taught to use religious language without strictly meaning it become conspicuously irreligious when they grow up, the sense of honesty in their early life being enlisted against religion, and the recoil from conscious insincerity being proportionately violent to the degree in which such insincerity was practically enforced. There is much less temptation to such hypocrisy, thank God, in these days or in this country. Nothing particularly is gained in a worldly sense—something may be lost—by an earnest profession of religion. A young man of education and ability knows perfectly well that, if his highest object in life be money or distinction, there

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

are better things to do with himself than to take holy orders; and in general society a man does not now lose caste, as he did twenty years ago, by avowing even his disbelief in Christianity. We may be tempted often to regret the change, but there are two sides to it. There are reasons for believing that those who do enter the church's ministry now do so with purer and higher motives, on the whole, than did the bulk of their predecessors; and an avowed disbelief is far less dangerous to the Church of Christ than an unwilling or forced or hollow conformity. Nothing can so injure the moral sense as an insincere profession of allegiance to secretly rejected truth, be the motive of that profession what it may. To repeat creeds which we do not believe, to say prayers to a Being, whether in public or in private, whose power of hearing us appears to us to be problematical, is to inflict upon the moral fibre of the soul the deadliest of wounds; it is to establish the reign of falsehood in the temple of the conscience. Far better is silence, terrible as it is, the silence of doubt, or the silence of disbelief, than this profane disregard of the sanctities of language, than this deepest self-degradation of a soul which can consent, for whatever reasons, to profess before the Being of beings what it does not mean.

IV. But hypocrisy of this coarse and conscious kind is too great a violence to the better side of human nature to be very common in any age. Our Lord glances at something more natural, more subtle, as it may seem to us, as it doubtless is, more pardonable. There is such a thing as being carried away by a torrent of enthusiasm into words and actions which, left to ourselves, we should not mean. It is not ourselves at times, it is only our sympathies with the enthusiasms around us, which cry, 'Lord, Lord.' We are social creatures, and in all kinds of ways we submit to, we reflect, the influence of society; and a great public enthusiasm controlling many minds and hearts, impelled and guided by a few powerful characters, always has the effect of extorting a certain percentage of homage from those who do not really share its determining motive. Everything is moving round them: they do not quite see why, but they think that they, perforce, must be moving too. They fall in with the stream, not as seeing that it is moving in the right direction, but because it is strong, because compliance is, for the moment, easier than resistance. They use the language of a position, the language of a particular epoch, the language of a certain circle; they take up the accents of a universal chant which is rising on all sides around them; they fall into the ranks of a great host which is proclaiming that it is moving forward to the regeneration of the world; they keep time by it, without thinking, in language or in action, as others do around them. I am far from saying that the power of enthusiasm

COMPLETE SERMON

around us is a bad thing, or that a man may not be led by it towards a true knowledge of God, and a solid practice of real religion. But a great many persons who undergo the influence of an enthusiasm of this kind are only carried up by it to a point which is short of complete and sincere adherence to the truth which it represents; and then they imagine themselves to be convinced when they only—if they knew the real state of the case—have caught a breath of sympathetic feeling. They lose themselves in the language, in the sympathies, in the activities, of others around them. They think that they are what others are, what they ought to be. And others say ‘Lord, Lord,’ not without wishing to be on the right side. They say it not without a certain superficial sincerity. And yet, of course, a day must come when every soul must stand alone—alone with its own stock of reality of purpose, and no other, face to face with itself, face to face with the eternal God. The borrowed glory of all other souls will not help you or me then. The conventional language which we used because others used it will not serve us then. The power of an enthusiasm which others felt, and which has swept powerfully over us and left us afterwards hard and cold, will not sustain us then. Nothing will help us then which has not been made by God’s grace genuinely our own—our own in this sense, that we mean it with all the purpose and intensity of the soul, whether others mean it or not.

And, lastly, and this I have in part anticipated, ‘Lord, Lord’ is sometimes the voice of feeling as distinct from conviction. Human feeling—it is one of the mysteries of our marvellous nature—is often strangely independent of the sense of reality, of the sense of truth. We see this in the influence of theatrical representations and of works of fiction, and it is one of the ways in which works of this kind may possibly do a serious injury to the character. People go into floods of tears or into ecstasies over a story which they know has no foundation in fact. But their feelings are enlisted: they express themselves for the moment, naturally, as they think, and sincerely; and this must involve a certain amount of loss, since it is, observe, an expenditure of valuable moral force upon an unreality. We are finite creatures after all. We have little enough, whether of thought or feeling or resolution, to dispose of during this our short day of life. We can ill afford to waste any of our little stock upon shadows of the imagination when there are so many stern or sad facts which might well engross more than we can give.

Now, this readiness to invest feeling in the cause of that which we do not recognise as true extends itself to religion. Feeling, of course, has its due sphere in the religious life of the soul, and a very important and attractive sphere that is. The duty of feeling is to recognise the beauty of truth, and without this tender and

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

engaging recognition, which feeling only can give, the hard logical sense of truth on the part of reason would be a poor and, I had almost said, an impotent thing for the elevation of the soul. But then, feeling must follow, it may not precede, conviction. If it does, it will soon get us into trouble. When people begin to say to themselves how beautiful this or that doctrine or system is, without concerning themselves with the prior question whether it is true, there is no saying where they may not wander amid the paths of error. And when feeling, not resting upon the sense of truth, cries out 'Lord, Lord,' it is not the soul itself which speaks. The cry represents not a truth which rules a personal spirit, but an impulse playing upon the surface of that spirit, certainly not controlling or guiding its real drift. In short, our Lord here would seem to be contrasting genuine religion with mere devoutness such as we see sometimes divorced from a religious sense of duty.

There is, no doubt, an extreme tendency in our day to run down devotion, as if it were an unnecessary and even effeminate appendage to that which is of substantial value in the soul's life, namely, moral excellence. This depreciation of devotion, let me say by the way, is itself the certain symptom of a dying or a dead faith. If a man says to me, 'I do not make any religious professions at all: I do not say any creeds or any prayers: I try to do my duty towards my fellow-men, and at any rate I escape the rebuke which Christ directed against those who say more than they mean,' I can only say to him, 'My friend, you remind me of the man who said that he would be perfectly honest, and would avow that when he had a chance of taking what was not his own, without the risk of detection, he invariably did so.' Surely, honesty in avowing what is wrong does not condone what is itself wrong? Ungodliness does not itself become respectable because, forsooth, it is not hypocrisy. Devotion is the soul's answer to the sight of God, just like the singing of the birds at the rising of the sun. When God in the awe and majesty of His attributes, when the incarnate Son in all the grace and tenderness of His life and of His death, when the blessed Spirit, the Lord and Giver of all true life to the human spirit, are present as facts before the eye of the soul, devotion follows as a matter of course. Not to be devout is not to be believing. Devotion is the common-sense of faith. If I see the living God, so powerful, so wise, so loving, so magnificent as He is, I naturally speak to Him, not merely because I know that He can hear, because I know that He will help me, but because He is there, because to speak to Him is the highest privilege—it is the best, the purest, instinct of my humanity.

But, on the other hand, there is such a thing as devotion that is active feeling divorced from religious obedience, and this it is which

COMPLETE SERMON

is censured by our Lord in the text. There are lives in which passionate bursts of feeling, strong and tender, towards our Saviour in His life, in His pain, on His throne, alternate with disobedience, deliberate, repeated, to the known will of God, to the simplest duties. And here there is a constant disposition to hope, to think, that the disobedience is atoned for by the warmth of feeling. Oh, few delusions can be more fatal than this. It is not feeling, it is conscience, which is the measure of our state before God. 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments.' 'Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' How fearful will be the awakening to find that the words of entreaty addressed to Him, so often on the lips during this earthly life, representing so much real fervour, as we thought, have been powerless and worse than powerless at the gate of Paradise, to find that we have mistaken some surface current of the soul for its deepest central life! No, our business here is not to give up devotion (God forbid), but to be, or by God's grace to try to be, sincere about it, to say, 'Lord, Lord,' meaning that we acknowledge in our weakness the rights of Him whom we thus address, conscious of our imperfections, but at least sincere in our willingness to obey. He does not expect more than sincerity of purpose. His atoning blood, His sanctifying Spirit, His life-giving sacraments, His prevailing intercession, will certainly do the rest.

It has been well and powerfully said that man's great work in life is the establishment of the reign of truth in the soul and in the character; truth of language, so that what we say may, so far as is possible, express accurately, without exaggeration, without concealment, just what we feel; truth of feeling, so that we may keep our sympathies loyal to worthy objects, loyal to what is great and noble in character, loyal, above all, to what we believe to be fact; truth of conviction, so that, so far as in this life is possible, we may give to facts and to facts alone the best homage of our understandings, be they the facts of the natural world, or the facts of God's revelation of Himself in grace. It is when the harmony between conviction and feeling, the harmony between feeling and language, is thus established that the soul is true, that the light of truth beams pervadingly through its wonderful machinery, and proclaims its substantial harmony with the will of God. And in this harmony consists the soul's real well-being, its freedom, its joy, its power; its freedom from that which really fetters, its liberty from sin; its joy in that which alone can kindle its deepest enthusiasms; its power, its real power, over itself as well as over circumstances, 'the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit,' thus, that we are at length through God's mercy, 'the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'

H. P. LIDDON.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

The Temper of Gospel Obedience.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. ROMANS viii. 15.



THE general subject which I wish to engraft on this text is the proper temper of a Christian's obedience. And the text suggests two aspects under which this temper may be considered: the one by force of contrast, and the other by the light of comparison.

I. The first aspect under which we are to contemplate a Christian's obedience is the contrasted aspect, or the spiritual service of the Gospel as it is opposed to any form of obedience performed in a slavish and unready mind. 'For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.' We see at once the nature of the Apostle's contrast. It is made between the free spiritual service of the Gospel and any other service which is performed under terror and restraint or bondage, whether the scholastic discipline of the Mosaic law, or the drudgery and toil of one who is labouring to get peace of conscience through the medium of a self-wrought obedience. Contrast, then, the temper of Gospel obedience with the severe discipline of the law. On this point the Apostle is the best exponent of his own views in that beautiful allegory of Agar and Sarah. 'It is written,' he says, 'Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondwoman, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory. For these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar; the other,' he goes on to say, answering to Jerusalem, 'which is above, which is free, and is the mother of us all.' To the same purport there is another illustration of the two dispensations addressed to the same Church. 'Even so,' he says, 'we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But after the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son.' We must be under tutors and governors; we

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

must be disciplined to habits of reverence and subjection; we must complete by measured stages the cycles of the spiritual economy, by which the infant grows into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And this guardian of the Church's minority, this agent appointed of God for carrying out its preparatory discipline, fitting the sons to become heirs, is the law; teaching the Church her one great lesson of spiritual helplessness and dependence, and shutting her up to the faith which should afterwards be revealed. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. We have a difficulty in fully comprehending the comparison by which the successive economies of religion are represented by the successive developments of an individual mind, but the image itself is one of constant recurrence. The Church is always dealt with as a spiritual unity. Her youth is the youth of life, to be allured by sense, to be moved by fear, to be bound down by definite laws until faith should take the place of the schoolmaster, and the sense of adoption should break the chains of fear. 'For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.'

This much may suffice to illustrate Christian service by contrast, or what Gospel obedience is not. It is not the spirit of bondage again to fear; it is not the yoke of which Peter said, 'Neither our fathers nor we were able to bear it.' It is not that labour of vanity which, unresting and unrewarded, un blessing and un blessed, leaves the heart sad, the conscience troubled, the mercy-seat without access, and the Father of spirits without a smile. No, it is something better, happier, more recompensing than all this. It is the service of love, the homage of the renewed affections, the filial obedience of those who, having received the Spirit of adoption, are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. And there is no peace until then. A man might spend a lifetime in working out a righteousness for himself, and yet be no nearer heaven. It is all lost time, all unprofitable labour. He is pouring water into a broken cistern, and earning wages to put them into a bag with holes. The law may lead us to Christ, but not the works of the law. They may be performed with diligence, with exactness, with self-denial, with pain, but until there has been a putting forth of the one covenant act of faith all will be disquietude in the worshipper, and the worship the spirit of bondage again to fear.

II. We come, therefore, to the other division of our subject, or the nature of Gospel obedience as illustrated by comparison, 'Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' The practice of adoption, or the act by which a person consents to take the child of another, and to treat it in all respects as if it were his

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

own, is of early origin. Moses was taken by the daughter of Pharaoh, and Esther by her kinsman Mordecai. In the Roman civil law, the rights of strangers to this relation were defined with considerable strictness, and were probably in the contemplation of the Apostle when applied to the state of believers under the Gospel. Thus, by this law the adopted children shared in the estate of the parents equally with the natural children. They assumed the name of the person into whose family they were taken. They engaged to render to those who adopted them all the honour and obedience due to natural parents, and were promised in return all the advantages of parental confidence and protection. Now these four marks of civil adoption among the ancients you will find exactly paralleled in the spiritual adoption of Christians. For instance, did the child among the Romans share in the privileges of the natural children? It is affirmed of the believer that 'if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.' Did the Roman bestow his own name on the child he adopted? 'Thou, O Lord,' exclaimed the prophet, 'art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy name.' Did the civil law exact from the adopted all honour and reverence to the parent? 'If I be a Father, where is Mine honour?' 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about Him.' And lastly, did the new father engage to treat the stranger with parental care and kindness? 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' From this view of the condition of the believer, namely, as a stranger, without merit and without interest, instated in the privileges of sonship, we may infer three probable characteristics of evangelical service: it will be reverent as one fearing to offend; it will be cheerful as one rejoicing to obey; it will be confident as one entitled to a blessing.

D. MOORE.

The Witness of the Spirit.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

ROMANS viii. 16.

CONSIDER first, whether the witness spoken of is to be attained? Secondly, whether it must be attained? And, lastly, how it may be attained?

I. Our first inquiry turns upon the general attainableness of this blessing. I say general attainableness, because it would not be sufficient to dismiss this part of the subject by saying that it has been

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

attained by others and therefore may be attained by ourselves ; would not be sufficient to say, 'There can be no reason why we should not strive after that elevated calm of spirit which was enjoyed by Abraham the friend of God, or that tranquil joy which lit up the countenance of dying Simeon ; or that majestic trust which enabled Stephen, amidst yells that stunned and stones that flew, to fix on the opening heaven his intent and unfaltering gaze.' True, all these had the witness of the Spirit. We cannot doubt that, to them, their personal justification before God was a great fact. What S. Paul believed of Clement and of other his fellow-labourers he must have believed of himself, that his name was written in the Book of Life. But these examples, it may be said, are to be cited for our distant and reverent imitation. We must come down to the saintly stature of common men and see what Scripture says in relation to them, what it offers, what it promises, what it urges them to press forward to, and enjoy, and claim ; and upon this showing we shall find that the sense of adoption, so far from being heaven's far-off prize held out to the highest saints—so far from being only the consummation of a high and holy and finished walk—is a near, present good which babes in Christ may grasp and the meekest of the earth may feel, which is offered to the prodigal first returning from his wanderings, and to the publican first humbled for his sins. Peace in duty, peace in suffering, peace in our spiritual approaches, peace in the contemplation of the great future which lies before us, not only is set forth in Scripture as a general attainable blessing, but when attained, is commonly made to give forth an utterance as plain, if not as audible, as a testimony addressed to the ear of sense, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.'

II. But allowing these proofs that the sense of adoption is not a privilege of such high and transcendent saintliness as to be attainable only by the few, but that it is in fact a common privilege of our common faith, the question next arises, whether what may be also must be. This is our second point for consideration ; or, is the inward witness of the Spirit necessary to our salvation ?

As in answer to our first inquiry whether the inward witness of the Spirit might be attained, we answer unhesitatingly, Yes ; so in answer to the question whether in all cases it must be attained, we answer as unhesitatingly, No. I could not, without laying a stumbling-block in the way of many weak Christians, without falsifying the testimony of the most extended pastoral experience, nay, without unparadising the souls of many whom I firmly believe to be now asleep in Jesus, say that no man could be saved who had not perceptibly to himself the witness of the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he belonged to the children of God. It is a privilege, and

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

a privilege which we lose much comfort to ourselves, much honour to our religion, much glory to our God and Saviour, if we fail to realise. Yet fail we may, and not fail of salvation. We may have the faith of reliance when we cannot get the faith of assurance; and when through the weakness of the flesh we cannot lay hold on the witness that is within us, we may yet be saved by laying firm hold on the hope that is set before us.

III. We come then to our last inquiry, with which I will briefly conclude, namely, what directions should be attended to in order that this inward witness may be obtained? And the question naturally sends us back to our definitions, to the constituent elements of which this witness is made up, and the source from which it is derived. And recurring to what we have said before, this witness is an impression of inward peace, the fruit of a certain comparison which the mind has been enabled to make between the statements of revelation and its own moral experience. I say 'enabled to make,' because until the light of the Holy Spirit has shone upon both objects, the book and the heart, the mind has nothing to compare. But this done, be this shed light of the Spirit great or small, it is obvious that the most direct way to the attainment of the desired peace is a vigorous prosecution of the comparison of which it is the result and fruit. In other words, the chief practical directions for gaining an inward assurance are that we cultivate a believing contemplation of Gospel truth, and institute a frequent and close examination into the state of our own hearts. Let there be first, then, I say, a believing contemplation of Gospel truth, an intent fixing of the mental eye on the revealed work of Christ, a diligent gathering of materials for faith to believe, and hope to lay hold on, and love to cling to, and gratitude to adore. The word can do nothing without the Spirit, neither does the Spirit, as a rule, act independently of the word. There, in the word, is the great original of which your heart is to be a copy; there is the sound first heard to which your conscience is to give a responsive echo. You must understand the language of the Spirit before you can interpret His witness, and must have the word of truth brought home to your conviction before the word of promise can give peace to your heart. Be careful, then, to keep this spiritual portrait constantly before you; make it the study of your life; observe its teachings; mark its expression; see what the believer is, and feels, and does, till at last, imbued with the feeling and life and spirit of the picture, you become like the thing you look on, and reflect the very graces you admire.

D. MOORE.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

Creation's Expectation.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. ROMANS viii. 19.

OBERVE what it was for which the true Christian waited and longed—the redemption of the body; and this will help us to understand ‘the manifestation of the sons of God’ which is mentioned in our text. They are evidently, if not the same thing, yet things which should occur at the same time. The redemption of the body, which is its final resurrection, is to consist of, or to occur with, ‘the manifestation of the sons of God.’ The sons of God are to be manifested gloriously, owned and displayed in the face of the universe, when the grave shall give up its deposit, and soul and body be admitted into heaven.

Here will be a point deserving your very close attention. An interest and importance are attached to the resurrection of the body which may place that great article of our faith under a new point of view. At the same time you should carefully observe, that by perusing the context of the passage on which we discourse, we can find that ‘the earnest expectation of the creature,’ an expectation which is exhibited by tokens of agony and distress, is shared by true believers; for they are described as ‘groaning within themselves.’

Let us follow out the trains of thought thus suggested. Here is the whole creation, the true believer as well as every other being, groaning in pain. Here is the redemption or resurrection of the body represented as the thing longed for in this universal distress. When we have carefully looked into both these facts, we may, by God’s help, understand something of the force of the remarkable saying, ‘For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.’

I. Now we would first observe that no passage of Scripture can be more valuable to the Christian than those which open to him the experience of the most eminent saints. If he can prove that the conflicts in which he is involved and the sorrows with which he is pressed are just those which engaged and weighed down God’s people of old, he has no right to think his own condition strange nor to use his experience as an argument against his security. There are many who distress themselves with suspicions that they are not true believers because they feel their love of God to be cold, and they are painfully conscious that corruption is still mighty within them. Now we do not say that the languor of spiritual affection and the

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

strength of indwelling sin ought to be anything else than occasions of grief and humiliation. But no one can, on these accounts alone, be warranted in concluding himself an unrenewed man. Let him remember the pathetic exclamation of S. Paul, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' If my grounds of complaint were of the same kind as those of an apostle, they cannot, at the least, be those of despair.

So that we can have no right, as we are often disposed, to expect perpetual peace and sunshine of spirit, or to infer that we are not advancing towards heaven because our expectations of its joys overpower not our grief. It appears that the most devoted believer may groan heavily in himself; nay, that an internal anguish may quite consist with the reception of the richest earnest of heaven. And thus, in place of writing bitter things against ourselves because the promised blessedness does not make us insensible to present distress, we ought to be content if, with a holy apostle, we can anticipate paradise whilst weighed down by the burdens of the flesh. We believe of many Christians that they distress themselves with the thought that the hope of heaven cannot have its due influence upon them unless it make them superior to the afflictions of life. They will argue: Surely, if our thoughts were rightly fixed on everlasting glories, and we did indeed anticipate what God hath prepared for His people, the present causes of distress would be unable to agitate us, and we should already enjoy unbroken happiness. But it is evident that such was not the case with S. Paul. And what ground have you then to conclude that it should be so with you? S. Paul groaned in himself though he had 'the first-fruits of the Spirit.' Therefore, let no one suppose that because often oppressed and wearied in mind he is either not approaching the possession of heaven or not duly swayed by its motives. It is true that our text sets itself against occasion of despondency; and we, indeed, thankfully acknowledge, and we earnestly pray, that the hope and anticipation of heaven will greatly animate the Christian during his sojourn on earth; for 'I, indeed, reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' But when we expect to turn earth into heaven, to make such use of what is promised that we shall almost annihilate what is present, when we think it matter of self-reproach that we are not so elevated by the majesty of what is promised as that our portion here is to soar above all sorrow and anxiety, it is well that we hearken to one whose faith we cannot think to rival nor whose rapture to reach; and hear S. Paul after he has made the whole creation vocal, and the universal utterance an utterance of distress, using language which proves that he included himself in this assertion of anxiety and weariness, 'For

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.'

II. Now, there is much more in these words than an implied answer to doubts produced by fixing some wrong standard of spiritual attainment; and that there may be the hope and certainty of heaven even where there is great spiritual suffering, is surely established by the declaration of S. Paul. But how it comes to pass that these two may co-exist; why, with all the evidence of being a true believer, there may be 'groaning in ourselves'—these are points which deserve our serious inquiry. Then, again, when 'the earnest expectation of the creature'—the creature including true believers—has been shown to be consistent with vital religion, the question will occur, Why should this expectation be fixed on 'the manifestation of the sons of God'? or rather as (which we have seen from the context is the same thing) the redemption or resurrection of the body. We will strive to embrace these several matters within the remainder of our discourse.

First, as to how a truly religious man, in whom the Spirit of God is actively working, can yet have share in that disquieted longing which the Apostle ascribes to the whole of this creation. You might perhaps have thought that when the Spirit was evidently engaged in renewing a man, exciting in him the love of God and of holiness, and continually increasing his conformity to the image of Christ, the heart could do nothing but exult as having proof of direct interest in the promises of the Gospel. But let it only be remembered that what is done towards mastering corruption serves but to show how much remains undone, and you will immediately perceive that what proves us true followers of Christ may yet minister to our sadness. We need not demonstrate this to those who know anything of spiritual experience. They will at once admit that they discover daily more of the wickedness of the heart and of the power of corruption; so that to grow in grace is to grow in a sense of their own great depravity. Where is the Christian, however long and however steadfastly he may have pressed towards heaven, who appears to himself to have advanced towards perfection? Rather, where is the Christian whose estimate of himself is not one which asserts him further off than ever from the scriptural standard? It is not that he goes back, nay, it is not that he fails to go forward, but it is spiritual improvement to be more and more conscious of natural depravity. One great, if not the chief work of grace, is the teaching us ourselves; and every lesson is a new demonstration of indwelling evil. Oh! he can have taken but few lessons in that most intricate yet interesting of subjects—his own heart, who has not learned to say with the prophet:—'It is deceitful above all things: who can know it?'

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

And yet will all admit that this must be painful. The believer will join his groans to those of the whole creation as every day's experience does but add to the power of indwelling sin. Yes, you will say, but there are often vouchsafed to the believer in Christ anticipations of the happiness with which the future comes charged. It is far enough from the dream of enthusiasm to say that the distant world will occasionally throw open its gates and allow those who are fighting the good fight of faith to animate themselves by glimpses of its splendours. Often when the mind muses on the saint's rest in the privacies of a holy solitude and in the retirement of communion with God and His Son, the promised glories will come out, as it were, of the shadowy distance, and time and its trials give place to eternity with its majesties. Thus it is that 'a peace that passeth all understanding' pervades the mind; and faith, nerved by the promises of the Word, brings into the soul a gladness which has nothing of earthly element. In scenes such as these the blessed view of heaven is so clear and elevated that, while privileged with the vision, the Christian rises superior to every fear and anxiety. He seems to himself to have finished his conflict, to have trampled death underfoot, and to be already mingling with the heavenly throng which rejoices in the presence of God and of the Lamb. And shall a man thus privileged be disquieted? Shall he join his groans to those of the creation? Yes, indeed; for it were a strange thought that the glimpses of heaven will make him less alive to the afflictions of earth. Shall the having gazed, though but for an instant, on what is pure, and peaceable, and bright, diminish his sensibility of the pollution and turmoil of the scene in which he still dwells? Shall he, when he returns from his lofty flight and comes down from his splendid excursion to engage once more in the business of probation, be again occupied with 'keeping under the body' and disciplining unruly passions? Shall he, think you, feel less than before of the irksomeness of the combat with corruption? or be more at home in the wilderness through which his path lies? Oh! it is not the view of heaven which will lighten the burden which lies on us because of our sinfulness. I had almost said it will increase that burden. Indeed, it is not possible that a believer should have gazed on the fair spreadings of the saint's home and contemplated, however distantly, what God hath prepared for him as a believer on His Son, without having strengthened the feeling that heaven is worth all his striving, and to resolve that he will wrestle for its happiness. But I cannot think that he will be more at ease than before; for the world will only seem drearier by contrast. I cannot think that the having listened to the harpings of angels will make the storm and the discord sound less offensively. I cannot think that, because he has tasted

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

the fresh waters of the river of life, he will find less bitterness in the wormwood which sin will yet bring into his cup. I cannot think that, with the earnest in his possession, he will be other than more intense in his longings for the perfect fountain. And therefore do I believe that the richer his anticipations of heaven the deeper will be his cry, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.' So that an Apostle, and that Apostle S. Paul, who had actually trodden the firmament and seen what saints enjoy, and heard what seraphs sing, he was, of all others, most likely to feel the pressure of spiritual anxieties and sigh for deliverance. Who, then, shall wonder that he uses language which shews that he included himself and other true believers in his description of the groaning and wailing of creation? 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.'

III. 'The manifestation of the sons of God.' We have already shown you that the manifestation is that which is to be made at the general resurrection when true believers—'the sons of God'—shall receive their glorified bodies and take visible possession of the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. The Apostle, indeed, knew himself to be a 'son of God,' but he had not yet been declared such in the face of the universe, nor visibly enrolled in the happy household. There was yet to come a public acknowledgment by God of the saints as His children, and their glorious investiture with the dignities which appertain to such relationship. For this adoption the Apostle longed. Yes, for this adoption, this manifestation, it was that the whole creation groaning in its every department looked with the intensest expectation. And this adoption or this manifestation is identified with what S. Paul calls the redemption of the body. The body was redeemed by Christ as well as the soul, but for wise purposes the application of this redemption is so deferred that death still claims the body as its prey. It was redeemed inasmuch as its resurrection was made sure. And yet we still wait for the redemption, inasmuch as the body hath yet to mingle with the dust. There will be emphatically the redemption of our body when appearing visibly as the conqueror of death and of hell, and, sending forth into the sepulchres the energies of His victory, Christ shall surround Himself with the saints of every generation—a countless army waiting for His summons and swelling His triumph. 'Sown in dishonour, but raised in glory; sown in weakness, but raised in power; sown a natural body, but raised a spiritual body,'—this is redemption, is it not? Oh! to be no more liable to pain, no longer a weak or failing thing, no longer subject to death, no longer the organ of sin, but transformed into glory, and the soul engaged in all the high business of glorifying God,

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

every faculty, and every sense an engine for executing the will of the Lord, and gathering in new materials of happiness—is not this the redemption of the body? And if the redemption of the body, is it not, moreover, ‘the manifestation of the sons of God’? The believer is indeed already the child of God, but it is in the spirit rather than in the flesh that he bears the impress of sonship. The soul presents tokens of a heavenly parentage, but it is yet true of the body that ‘there is a law in its members warring against the law of the mind.’ But at the resurrection the fallen creature shall be visibly admitted into the family of God. With body and soul both purged from every trace and emancipated from every consequence of guilt, yea, both more nobly endowed than had the birthright never been forfeited, man shall wear every feature of the lost image of his God, and the son be known by his likeness to the Father.

H. MELVILL.

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Tongue or Heart?

Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. S. MATTHEW vii. 21.

I.



CONSIDER unreality in public worship. It is not hard to see how the temptation to unreality there enters in, too often successfully. There are the crowd of worshippers. It is well, but are they worshippers? they are a congregation, but of what? Worshippers of course. Hear them, watch them—the fervent response, the rolling Amen, the burst of song, the fervent Litany, do not all these show the worshipper? If we have these outward indications, still beware; look below the surface—what do they spring from? Whither do they tend? Hear our Lord in warning love, ‘Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ But look again. How many there are of whom we cannot say that much? In every congregation there is sure to be, thank God, a leaven of earnestness, attention, and intelligent heart-worship; there is also, alas, sure to be a mass of inattention, formalism, hypocrisy, and unreality. And, as is often the case, our best things are our greatest dangers. Ye know what makes the ‘Lord, Lord’ of public worship acceptable or hateful to the King of kings. How is it rendered? Let the Church be as

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

gorgeous as all human art dealing with the most costly of earthly materials can make it, it is still too poor for and unworthy of the Lord of all things. Let music lend all her ravishment to entrance the soul and give expression to the deepest feelings, let every outward indication be given, let the congregation rise up as one man when the clergy enter to welcome them as coming in God's name, and lowly fall on their knees to pray for a blessing on them and on themselves, let every knee be bent in prayer, every head lowly bowed at the all-hallowed name of Jesus or the Trinity, let the full burst of sound from organ and white-robed choir and the thronging people ascend up with the voice of praise and thanksgiving from such as keep holy day, let all this be and pray God it may be; only see to it that it is not because it is a fashionable habit, or represents a party, or is agreeable to the individual taste, or looks well, or is a defiance of others; see that it be the result of real heartfelt interest, not the substitute for it. By doing these you raise as it were the standard to defy the evil one; have you grace in your hearts to withstand his assaults?

II. If those who worship outwardly, who use holy words, and claim the knowledge of the Most High, will not all, of necessity, enter into the kingdom of heaven hereafter, who will?

Christ tells us, 'He that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.' There is all the difference between saying and doing. 'Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?' That holy will of God which Christ came to earth to perform, that will of God which towards us is not only redemption but sanctification, what is our attitude towards it? Do we try first of all to know what it is? Do we wish to do it? When we do things such as pray, or go to Church, or help a friend, or relieve distress, do we do it because it is right, because it is God's will, or do we do it in some way because we like to do it? Take our Blessed Lord's example in this as in every other matter. We cannot attain to it I know, but He Himself sets high standards before us that we may constantly aim high. He came to do God's will. He said, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me'; and when all Satan's wrath, and all His own human weakness would have turned Him from His great sacrifice for us, still His prayer of love for us and devotion to His Heavenly Father was that He might do His will. And here, as we are specially on the subject of worship, let me mention one way in which Christ's will, and so the Father's will, might be done very differently from what it is at present. Of all the parts of our public worship there is one and one only which was distinctly, formally, and universally laid upon us. Matins, evensong, litanies, collects, hymns, are some of them composed, all of them arranged, by human authority, even when that

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

human authority is guided by the Spirit of God. But the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the 'Do this in remembrance of Me,' is the one plain, unmistakable order given by our Lord Himself, the one expression of His will as to the method and form of our public worship. While we stop away, while we content ourselves with prayers and canticles, while we listen to sermons or read religious books, or pay for a quiet, because deceived, conscience through the week by one service sat out on a Sunday, or while we stay away because we do not feel moved to come, or because we know we have sins on our conscience which must be removed before we can come, or because we cannot, dare not, brace ourselves up to the religion of the Cross, are we not in all these ways saying 'Lord, Lord' with our lips, and in our actions and hearts disregarding God's will?

G. C. HARRIS.

The Christian to be known by his Fruits.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. S. MATTHEW vii. 16.

TO enumerate all the fruits of religion would be, in fact, to recount the whole catalogue of Christian virtues. I shall, therefore, content myself with laying before you five leading characteristics, which we may safely assert will ever distinguish that man who lives under the actual influence and guidance of the Gospel of Christ.

I. The first of these is humility. I mean not by this any affected submission or interested condescension to conciliate others, high or low; I mean not a weak subjection of our own reason and judgment to the mere consideration of superior rank, or wealth, or authority, nor do I mean any unnecessary degradation of an upright and honest mind to the self-abasement of those who are so eager to declare their own vileness and utter sinfulness, in order, as they say, to magnify God's mercy in their salvation, or rather, as they are sometimes bold enough to term it, their election. The humility of the Gospel is the deep sense of our constant dependence upon God, 'who giveth us to will and to do,' of our having nothing which we did not receive, of our being answerable for all that we have received, of our being altogether unworthy of the least of blessings conferred upon us, together with a full conviction that we owe a brotherly affection in Christ to every son and daughter of Adam around us, however low, however unfortunate.

II. A second fruit of Christianity is purity. 'Every one that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure.' The great end of the Gospel is to counteract the corruption and depravity of our fallen nature. It imposes a life of struggle against evil passions,

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

habits, and propensities. To this end it enforces the 'keeping of the heart' by the regulation of our very thoughts and rising inclinations. The Christian has gradually raised his ideas of holiness so high that he cannot consent to lose sight of his vocation, but strives to go on unto perfection. He finds he cannot pass through the world with supineness and indifference to that plain and explicit declaration, that 'The wisdom which is from above is first pure.'

III. Consistency is another eminent distinction of the Christian. Uniformity of conduct is the best proof that it is directed by principle. The very best code of morals ever invented by man cannot secure this consistency. It will be found to consist, like the buildings of a rude age, of a great variety of materials, unlike in nature, unfitting in form, and unable to resist the attacks of time and tempests. Not so Christianity; the work of that 'wise master-builder,' as S. Paul has designated him, 'in whom,' as he observes in another place, 'all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.' Every man who has just ideas of his religion must know that its precepts and provisions are applicable to all ranks and circumstances and seasons of life, that it is a peculiarly appropriate guide and passport through this vale of danger, darkness, and difficulties, and that it can render the believer's character at all times simple, equal, and similar to itself. Amidst the tumult of passion, the crooked paths of selfish cunning, and the endless variety of earthly changes and chances, the Christian course is plain and direct. There is no action that does not seem to spring from the same source. He does not worship God in church and Mammon at home. He does not wear a smile and composure abroad which do not belong to him at his own fireside, or which can be instantly removed by any trifling annoyances of domestic life. In a word, his conduct becomes at length a smooth and tranquil current, which springs from one source, and which flows on with great regularity into a blessed eternity.

IV. And this leads me to a fourth fruit of Christianity, namely, equanimity, a calm and equal or even state of mind. The Christian, by raising and regulating his affections, has taught himself to look with indifference on the great objects of worldly desire, and to bear the loss of them with unruffled patience, resignation, and even gratitude. To look with pious and steady complacency upon poverty, sickness, oppression, neglect, adversity, and death itself, does indeed argue a high and thorough sense of the soul's worth, and of the exceeding weight of glory that awaits them that 'endure afflictions.' It evinces a dependence on heaven 'by the sure and steadfast anchor of the soul,' as it is called by the Apostle, which is at once the mark and privilege only of the Christian.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

V. The last test of Christian principles which I shall adduce is usefulness—a life of usefulness. The duty itself is constantly inculcated in Scripture, but by no one more than by Christ Himself.

The Christian is not merely ‘not slothful in business,’ not only always and innocently occupied, but his labours and pursuits are of a beneficial tendency to his friends, to the poor, to the great brotherhood of mankind.

A. B. EVANS.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of a Mission.

(*A Mission Sermon.*)

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. S. MATTHEW vii. 20.

I. **W**HAT do we mean by a mission? Briefly, a mission is a concentrated effort for the advancement of the interests of the kingdom of Christ in a particular locality. It is the gathering into a focus and putting into more intense activity the religious influences which are ordinarily brought to bear upon the hearts and minds of men around us. We are accustomed to divide our congregations mentally into two distinct classes. Not presuming to judge, certainly not presuming to judge in every case how individuals are to be arranged (for to God alone it appertains to read the heart), we yet believe that this division does actually exist in most large assemblies of professedly Christian people. On the one side there are those who by an act of self-surrender have given themselves and are habitually giving themselves to Jesus Christ, who are living with reference to His will and in dependence upon His grace. Of them we say, in Scriptural language, that they are born again of the Spirit and have been made new creatures in Jesus Christ. Over against these are persons, probably in many ways estimable and excellent, who are yet destitute of spiritual life. Nominally followers of Jesus Christ, their discipleship is one of appearance and not of reality. Their religion is of the head only and not of the heart. Personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ as their Saviour, their guide, their friend, their portion, they have not and do not profess to have. And for the most part, if we are not mistaken, they are more or less conscious that there is something wanting, something yet remaining to be done; they are more or less in the habit of making occasional resolves that that deficiency shall some day be supplied, and that that work shall some day be done before it is too late.

Recognising, then, the existence of both these classes, our ordinary ministry aims at the benefit of both. No more is aimed at in a mission. The only difference is, that the time being shorter the

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

effort is more intense. Our preacher will make it his object (God helping him) to deepen the spiritual life already imparted to those amongst you who are children of God, and so to set Christ before you in the marvel of His person and the greatness of His work, as that your minds may be enlightened with a truer appreciation of what He is in Himself, and of what He has done and is doing for you, and that your wills may be stirred up to a more perfect and entire consecration of yourselves to His blessed service; and he will also make it his object, God helping him, to reach the hearts of those who are careless and indifferent, or formalistic and worldly, to lead them to true repentance, and to bring them, by the power of the divine love, to the acceptance of Jesus Christ with heart and life.

II. Let us consider, in the second place, the advantages which may be expected to accrue from the holding of a mission. Amongst these I would mention the offering up of much prayer, of more prayer than usual, on the part of the people of God. We 'believe,' as our Creed expresses it, 'in the Holy Ghost.' We regard the Holy Ghost as the Lord and Giver of life. Without His presence and help, we are persuaded the best-conducted mission, with the most perfect organisation and the most eloquent preaching, will be nothing but a failure. There may be stir and excitement and laudation, crowds may gather round the pulpit and hang upon the preacher's lips, and not a few, perhaps, influenced by his appeals, may flock to receive advice and guidance in the after-meeting, but no souls will be saved, no believers built up in their most holy faith, Christ will not be honoured, and no real work will be done. It will all be like the pleasant voice of a sweet singer, or the sound of a harp when a man touches it skilfully and awakens the melodies which slumber in its chords. A transient impression will be produced, but it will pass away and be speedily forgotten. What we want is the help of the Holy Ghost, that He may give life to dead souls, and make the Word a message from God, a message of salvation to every one who hears it.

Another obvious advantage is to be found in the interest excited at such a time in the subject of religion, and in the fact that a religious movement is likely to become a topic of common conversation, whether it be favourably or adversely commented upon.

Yet, again, there is an advantage in the change of voice, manner, and style which comes in with what I may call a 'foreign preacher,' provided he preaches the truth of God. After a time the unconverted men and women in our congregations become so habituated to our way of putting things, so hardened, I fear I must say it, by constant resistance, that they are completely impervious to any moral influence which we may bring to bear upon them. I look at myself. So far as

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

the people of God amongst us are concerned, I feel pretty sure of securing their interest and attention, and of being able to help them forward in the divine life (God willing) perhaps for some time to come. At all events, if I do not, the fault will be my own. Such is the inexhaustibleness of Scripture, such the manifoldness of revelation in its application to our human needs, that a man who studies his Bible, and himself grows in grace and in knowledge, need not be under much apprehension of running short in the material which he wishes to place before his people. Draw out of the treasury what you may, there is always more behind. Take as much fruit as you please from the tree, there is always something coming forward to supply the vacant place. God reveals Himself more and more to His servants who wait upon Him on the Mount, and they may always come down to tell, with what capacity they have, of the vision of beauty and glory upon which it has been their privilege to gaze.

III. My third point, the dangers of a mission, I hardly like to pass by entirely. One chief danger, to my mind, lies in the overvaluing of spiritual excitement, and in the undervaluing of solid, steady, scriptural instruction. Emotion is a great factor in our religious life, but emotion without the steadying influence of scriptural knowledge and growth in grace may and will lead to disastrous results; and sure I am that if it is not one result of our approaching mission, that there is more Bible-study amongst us, more valuing of the opportunities of instruction, and of the means of grace, our mission will have proved itself a failure. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' And by its fruits ye shall know a mission; not by the passing emotion of the hour, not by the crowding to the preacher, not by loud professions of being converted and saved, but by the quiet, solid, settled, sober routine of a Christian life, by the growth in grace and in wisdom, by the increase in the knowledge of God through the use of the means which He has appointed for that purpose, and by the abounding in the abiding good works of patience, humility, meekness, love, self-restraint, and self-sacrifice, which are to the praise and glory of God through Jesus Christ.

G. CALTHROP.

OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

What is Your Ideal?

And God said: Ask what I shall give thee. 1 KINGS iii. 5.



OUR ideal means that in which we most thoroughly believe as good and worth having, that which we shall try to gain, that which we consider to be the true object of our life. If it be low and poor, we may become lords, or we may become millionaires, but our lives will be low and poor also; if it be noble and lofty, we may be paupers like Luther, or lepers like Father Damien, but our lives will be lofty and noble, too.

I. What is your ideal? It is too probable that the question takes many men and women by surprise. Ideal? We have none. What are we aiming at? Why, nothing at all. Yes, that is the curse of it. So many have no object. Our little barques are tossed on the sea of life; and, though it is swept by many gusts of wind and is parted by many currents and is thick with sunken reefs, no pilot is at the helm—the helm is broken. Men and women often drift hither and thither through life, never turning an eye to the guiding reins which to them have become useless. Do we not know scores of such moral ciphers?—petty in all their aims, not to be trusted at any time, without depth, without worth, without stability. We do not go to them when we need advice, we do not look to them when we crave for sympathy; as for asking them to be interested in any generous and unselfish aim, or to subscribe for any kind or worthy purpose, we never dream of it. Smoke and lukewarm waters are their perfection, and if they are not more often swept away into some unknown abyss of crime by some sudden hurricane of temptation, it is only because the devil, secure of these Laodiceans already, and not thinking much of them, though they think so much of themselves, does not deem them worth any expenditure of his energy.

But, if we have an ideal and aim, how infinitely important it is that it should be a worthy one! Many men have some ideal that they admire of persons or conditions. Very strange are the ideals of some men. To one class, the successful jockey seems to be the supreme of men, or the successful prize-fighter; and the personal effects of these heroes sell at fancy prices, so small are human aspirations. To others, the man of fashion seems to be the one to be admired, or the

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

sleek man of business who has made money, and has his suburban villa and drives to his counting-house in his neatly-appointed brougham. These are the little gods of little men. And to what strange results such ideals lead!

When men imitate men whom they wrongly admire, the imitation is feeble; even when they try to imitate the truly wise whom they rightly admire, their imitation is too often superficial, mistaken, one-sided, or a strained attempt to reach that which is by them unattainable. Perhaps, however, men more often idealise conditions than they make heroes of persons; they set before them something which they desire, and, because the object of their desire is often ignoble or delusive, they end in degradation, disappointment, or despair. It is a very fatal thing to have an inferior or a mistaken end in view. It is like steering straight upon a rock. And it is really marvellous how generation after generation, in spite of all experience, men go on being deceived. The Mohammedan legend about Christ is full of insight, but he compared the man who desired only earthly things to one who drinks sea water, and becomes more thirsty the more he drinks, and dies mad. And the strange thing is that the devil scarcely tries to lie to his votaries; he does not deceive—he tempts; he knows that that will be enough. Before the silly fish in the dim waters he dangles the gilded bait; he knows the victim will rush at it and swallow it. Then he will be able, in the picture of S. James, to drag him out, to gasp and lie torn and wounded on the shore.

One of the vilest ideals is that of wealth. The greed of gold is the meanest, and its ideals are attainable by anybody. Any brainless weakling can, like a natural brute beast made to be taken and destroyed, corrupt himself in those things which he naturally knows. Any fool, if he chooses only to creep and crawl enough, can get rich, if he likes. And riches have made millions mean, and millions dishonest, and millions God-forgetting; but what man who ever lived have they made happy? Human souls are not low enough, after all, to be made happy by accumulation, as the beetle is, though they may spend their life at it as the beetle does. He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be honest, and many a man who is making, or has made, a fortune by dishonest bargains, by adulterated goods, by grinding the faces of the poor, by cheating the ignorant and the confiding, by trades which ruin the bodies and souls of men, by shoddy and by sham, by false weights and deceitful balances, which are an abomination to the Lord, has sold his eternal jewel for the dross, not one atom of which he can take away with him. 'Who is that purpureal personage who has such a splendid dress?' asks the Latin epigrammatist. The answer is, 'Take the plaster off his forehead, and underneath you will read the three letters F U R, Fur [thief],

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

branded there.' Many a respected person in society, who has made money by base means, deserves just as much to have those very letters branded on his forehead, knowing very well that they are branded indelibly on his soul.

II. When God intends to fill the soul, it has been said, He first makes it empty; when He wishes to enrich a soul He first makes it poor; when He wishes to exalt a soul He first makes it sensible of its own want and nothingness. But as for earthly successes, they are vain in two ways: vain because they are often unattainable; vain because, when attained, they are of their very nature disappointing. God disillusions us by refusing our desire, or by granting our desire and sending leanness withal into our souls. You all want happiness; earthly things do not and cannot give it, and never have done. Satiety and sloth are poor counterfeits, but these mock the poor worldling and vex the feverish.

There is one man, and one only, of whom the ideal is perfect, attainable, satisfying, ennobling, eternal; it is the ideal of Him by whose name every one of you is called—the Man Christ Jesus; it is the ideal of holiness to which He excited us, and the example which He set, 'that we might follow in His steps.'

DEAN FARRAR.

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Proving of Philip.

When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. S. JOHN vi. 5-7.

I.  HE character of Philip is indicated clearly in the gospel history. He was the man who, being called by Christ, straightway went and found somebody else. 'Philip findeth Nathanael.' But when Nathanael has an objection to make to Philip's claim for his Master, all that Philip can say is, 'Come and see.' He was not good at arguing. It was Philip, also, to whom in Holy Week came certain Greeks, attracted very likely by his Greek name, saying, 'Sir, we would see Jesus.' But Philip hesitates to bring

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

them into the Master's presence. He is not quite sure what he ought to do. He consults Andrew. And the two together bring the request to Jesus.

There were two kinds of people to whom Philip found it hard to speak. To the objector, to the inquirer, he knew what to say. Of course the time came when Philip's whole time was taken up with meeting objectors and inquirers. Whoever asked, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' whoever came saying, 'Sir, we would see Jesus,' that was the very person whom Philip wanted to get by the hand. But here we find him hesitating, not knowing what to say, behaving just as nine-tenths, perhaps, of the Christian people whom we know would behave under similar circumstances.

A great company of people, who felt the need of help just as much as Christ and the Apostles felt the need of rest, had gone by land around the head of the lake, and taken sudden possession of this country. And when Christ came there were thousands of them. The solitude was crowded. Rest was not to be thought of. Then it was that Christ proved Philip. For it is written, 'When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this He said to prove him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.' This was an eminently practical answer. Philip evidently was a practical man. He was acquainted with the cost of things. He knew how much money the apostolic brotherhood had in their scanty treasury. He decided at once that this generous thought of Christ's could not be executed. It would take too much money. Philip was a man who had some idea of money. What he would have said to S. Theresa's project, who started out, you remember, to build a hospital having two halfpence in her pocket, and saying, 'Two halfpence with God can build a city'—what Philip would have said to that sort of financiering, we cannot say. At any rate there is no mention of God here. The bread will cost so much money. We have not that amount of money; the plan cannot be carried out.

II. Philip of Bethsaida was a man whom we all recognise as having his counterparts among us.

What was the defect in Philip's answer? It was a perfectly true answer; it was eminently reasonable, matter-of-fact, and practical. It was the answer which any sensible man acquainted with the cost of bread and the value of money might naturally give to such a question. And yet Philip of Bethsaida failed. But why and where? What was the defect in Philip's answer?

I would say that one defect in Philip's answer was that it was a

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

hasty answer. He spoke at once, taking no time for thought. Perhaps if he had considered a little he might have answered differently. Certainly, if he could have known, as we who read the story know, that Christ was saying that to prove him, he would have bethought himself and met the test a little better. It would be well if we could all remember what Philip failed to remember—that Christ is all the time proving us.

Philip ought to have known better than to have made that quick decision, that the whole matter was impossible. Whatever Christ proposes is for ever possible. When we look out, as we do to-day, at the needs of men, and behold the great hungry multitude of the poor, and compare the world in which we live with that kingdom of Christ which He promised, and for which we pray, we have no right to pronounce a verdict of impossibility. All that is best is possible, because God is behind it.

There was, accordingly, another defect in Philip's answer besides the defect of haste—it was a self-sufficient answer. When Jesus proposed that generous plan, and Philip could see no way of carrying it out, the disciple ought to have turned to the Master and answered, 'Lord, Thou knowest.' Instead of that, he endeavoured to puzzle the matter out in his own mind. And then the whole Twelve tried the same experiment. They also tried to figure out the problem; and when they failed to get a satisfactory answer they contentedly considered the matter settled. They could find no answer; therefore there was none, except a negative, and that they fixed upon. It was as if a company of people should dispute beside an unopened geography as to whether Ceylon is an island or a peninsula. It does not seem to have occurred to Philip and the others to ask the Master.

If we are wise, if we really do believe that our own understanding is not the absolute measure of existence, and that the limits of our own thinking are not the final boundaries of truth, if we honestly desire to know what is beyond, the most reasonable thing that we can do is just to take the word of Christ. We do not think it necessary to understand all the intricate mathematical calculations which establish the fact that the earth moves. We believe that fact in flat contradiction to the sight of our eyes, because it has been pronounced upon by the scientific masters. Neither is it necessary to understand all the elaborate metaphysical reasonings that go to show that pain and sin can exist in a world which is governed by a holy and omnipotent God. That God loves us seems sometimes to be as flat a contradiction to our experience as that the earth revolves. But the great spiritual Master has pronounced upon that.

Let us not forget Christ, as Philip did. That was the very heart of his failure, and the secret and explanation of his hasty and self-

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

sufficient answer. He forgot Christ. We must remember Him. In all the difficulties that press upon us in our generation, some of them sociological, some of them theological; some touching the problem of poverty, some touching the problem of belief; some tempting us to a hasty answer, others tempting us to a self-sufficient answer; let us find our refuge and our help in the sure word of the Lord Christ.

GEORGE HODGE.

The Christian Idea of the Universe.

It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens. Col. i. 19, 20.

THESE words of S. Paul contain, in the briefest possible space, the Christian idea of the universe as it is disordered, troubled, by man's self-assertion and self-seeking. They show us a far-off vision of the unity and life of all created things. They show us the triumph of divine love in the end, corresponding with the revelation of divine love in the beginning. They show us, meanwhile, a way of suffering which Christ has opened, along which we must move towards our appointed goal. They show us written over the dark scenes of human sorrow and affliction, earth's ruins and desolation, written in letters of light which can never be wholly eclipsed—from God, in God, unto God. And in the strength of that message we can wait and work.

I. As Christians, we hold without one doubt, one reserve, our belief in the progress of all that God has made to that end which God has fixed, which is His own open presence. As Christians, we look through the manifold afflictions which delay the temporal accomplishment of the divine counsel to the counsel itself, fulfilled in the risen Lord. As Christians, we know nothing as great or small where the divine fulness uses every part of an instrument of its working; even as the lake or the dewdrop alike reflects the glory of the immeasurable sky. As Christians, we strive to give reality to that sense of the sublime which comes to our souls in still moments, of a spirit that impels all thinking things, all objects of thought whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the round ocean and the living air. As Christians, we cherish that temper of sympathetic reverence which steals over us when we gaze on the broad sea, and the silent plains, and the deep night, and learn that these also are not foreign to that humanity which Christ has taken to Himself. As Christians,

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

we strive to read letter by letter, with frank and unwearying devotion, the message of God written on the mountains and the forests, in the heaven and on the earth, which would have been a continuous unfolding of one fulfilment of love, if our disordered faculties had not lost the power of interpreting it. As Christians, we watch with growing interest every sign of the outward manner of God's workings which students of nature lay open, that in them we may find parables of the unseen working of Him, all of whose operations must be regarded by us under one law. As Christians, we believe that through the Incarnation we are enabled to regard material things as the clothing of spiritual forces, manifestations in fitting forms of one ever active life—sacraments, I will venture to say, of a present revelation.

Such a view of the universe, such a belief, meet some urgent dangers to which we are all now exposed. The same spirit of eager and intense inquiry which detects the marvels of beauty, the problems of organisation, the far-reaching correspondences of structure which lie in some minute crystal or tissue, tends to obscure our perception of the larger relations of being. The examination of the physical phenomena of life offers results so definite and so instructive that we are tempted to include the less calculable activities of Nature and of man, we are tempted to become like students who concentrate their thoughts upon a single vessel of the human frame and forget the energies of the human life to which it ministers; and the temptation is alike powerful and perilous, for in the one case we feel a proud mastery over our subject, in the other case our subject overpowers us. And do not we all know that it is that which cannot be mastered or measured which fills us with noble wonder and pious adoration?

II. We need, then, exactly in proportion as we are engaged in details, to seek the invigorating refreshment which flows from such a vision of the living unity of creation as our faith offers to us; we need for ripe and rich maturity, not length of years and wealth of means, but souls more open to the fulness of the one prevailing life; we need a keener sense of the commonest joys which no one can exhaust or monopolise. And we need this, not for any private satisfaction, but that we may do our parts towards, I will venture to say, the consummation of the world; for this consummation is made in some degree dependent on our efforts. 'Repent, and turn again,' S. Peter said to the multitudes when the first sign had shown the power of the Christian society—'Repent and turn again, that so there may come seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord,' that there may come times of restoration of all things. Sympathy with the counsels of God gives fuller knowledge, and fuller knowledge rouses to more vigorous effort; for we are not taught to acquiesce in any indolent optimism, while we are encouraged to discern the move-

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ment of the world towards its new birth. The sight of God's purpose is a call to us to become fellow-labourers with Him, sharing in the pain through which His will must now be accomplished. The blood of Christ was the condition of peace, the ground of the reconciliation of all things; and they who seek to establish this peace, this reconciliation on the scene of their own services, must welcome, on their part, the law of the divine working.

There are on every side signs of distress and perplexity—the pitiless devastations of material forces, the bitter antagonisms of nations and of men, the corruptions of passion. But what then? These are of time, and behind them rises the eternal counsel of God. It was His good pleasure to reconcile through Christ all things unto Himself, having made peace by the Blood of the Cross. Through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens, the Blood of the Cross is infinitely mightier than the selfishness of man. The good pleasure of God, though its fulfilment tarry, must prevail. That Blood is our strength, that good pleasure is our confidence; while we work for our brief day which faces towards the light, and know, when the eyes of our heart are opened, that heaven lies about the loneliest toiler and illuminates the dullest task.

BISHOP WESTCOTT.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

Debts. God is our Creditor, we His debtors.

1. He is omniscient, we cannot conceal a debt from Him; ROM. viii. 12.
2. He is Almighty, He can exact the debt by force;
3. He is just, He will and must be paid;
4. He is Omnipresent, none can escape Him.

Fruit. 1. What fruit of Self-abasement.

S. MATT. vii. 16. Have you found out the evil of your connection with the first Adam? (Rom. v. 19.)

Do you know the plagues of your own heart? (1 Kings viii. 38.)

The hell of corruption *there*? (Jer xvii. 9.)

Do you feel you have never lived one moment to His glory? (Rom. iii. 25.)

Do you feel that to all eternity you never can be justified by anything in yourself? (Rev. vii. 14.)

2. What fruit of believing.

Have you really and fully uptaken Christ as the Gospel lays Him down? (S. John v. 12.)

ILLUSTRATIONS

Do you cleave to Him as a sinner ? (1 Tim. i. 15.)

Do you count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him ? (S. Matt. ix. 9.)

Do you feel the glory of His person ? (Rev. i. 17.)

His finished work ? (Heb. ix. 26.)

His offices ? (1 Cor. i. 30.)

Does He shine like the sun into your soul ? (Mal. iv. 2.)

Is your heart ravished with His beauty ? (Song of Sol. v. 16.)

3. What fruit of crying after holiness ?

Is this the one thing you do ? (Phil. iii. 13.)

Do you spend your life in cries for deliverance from this body of sin and death ? (Rom. vii. 24.)

Ah ! I fear there is little of this. The most of God's people are contented to be saved from the hell that is without. They are not so anxious to be saved from the hell that is within. I fear there is little feeling of your need of the indwelling Spirit. I fear you do not know the 'exceeding greatness of His power' to usward who believe.

I fear many of you are strangers to the visits of the Comforter. God has reason to complain of you, 'Wherefore should they bring forth wild grapes ?'

4. What fruit of actual likeness to God ?

Do you love to be with God ? 'To climb up near to God (Gen. v. 22), to love, and long, and plead, and wrestle, and stretch after Him ?'

Are you weaned from the world ? (Ps. cxxxi.) from its praise, from its hatred, from its scorn ?

Do you give yourselves clean away to God ? (2 Cor. viii. 5) and all that is yours ? Are you willing that your will should be lost in His great will ? Do you throw yourselves into the arms of God for time and for eternity ? Oh, search your hearts and try them, ask God to do it for you, and 'to lead you in the way everlasting !' (Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24 ; p. 247, M.)

It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.

*A Child's
Prayer.*

Please, dear God and Jesus Christ, bless my dear father and mother ; make my mother's shop pay her well ; and give us both enough to eat and drink, and to put on ; S. MATT. vii. 20. take care of me as you do of the sparrows, please ; make me a good child. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, and teach me to make the pies and the soup better and better. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

Scriptures Proper to the Day.

EPISTLE,	1 COR. X. 1-13.
GOSPEL,	S. LUKE XVI. 1-10.
FIRST MORNING LESSON,	1 KINGS X. to v. 25.
FIRST EVENING LESSON,	1 KINGS XI. to v. 15. OR 1 KINGS XI. to v. 15.
SECOND LESSONS,	ORDINARY.

I. COMPLETE SERMON

A Way of Escape.

A way to escape. 1 Cor. x. 13.



PAUL, in this epistle, was writing from Ephesus to Corinth—in other words, from Asia to Europe. Many things divide us: one thing unites. Time and place, rank and worth, age and country, set different members of the human family far apart, wide asunder, and yet, in Christ Jesus, all may be one; and S. Paul can write under the shadow of Diana of Ephesus, with magic rites and abominable idolatries all around him, to dwellers in another idolatrous city, infamous for its immoralities, and touch a cord to which their hearts vibrate just as one, because Christ is the theme, and because the spirit of Christ is the inspiration. And that theme and that inspiration which knit together two corners of the world then, and made S. Paul bold wherever he travelled, and a power to whomsoever he addressed, will assert itself still in its obliteration of time and space,

COMPLETE SERMON

makes this New Testament, makes these letters of S. Paul, the equal property of every land and age, gives the ear to hear and the eye to see at any distance whatever of condition or circumstance, whether of mind or life, enables us this evening to read, as if written to us, this paragraph of a very ancient Greek epistle, though the Ephesus from which it is dated has long been a desolation, and the Corinth to which it is addressed is now a wretched village, with the memories rather than the memorials of two or three successive civilisations.

And there is yet another thought in this obliteration in Jesus Christ of all natural distances and differences. Mark how S. Paul in this chapter freshens into new life the old histories of the Bible, makes these Corinthians see in Israelite wanderings the type of all human wanderings and strayings, and read in Israelite judgments the history of the dangers and catastrophes of their own. Yes, the Old Testament is not dead, as some speak in these times. It is still the breath of life, because it hath the breath of God in it. 'All these things,' S. Paul says to these Corinthians, who had never heard, perhaps, of Israel—'All these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.' Warned by Israel's examples, so solemnly vocal o'er the wide gulf which separates privilege from safety, and opportunity from salvation, 'let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'

Such is the frame and setting of my brief text. S. Paul has enumerated several kinds of temptation, all of which were exemplified in the forty years' wandering of Israel. The terrible judgments which followed upon these sins of the desert should teach us, he says, the solemnity of our position as members of that Church of God which has been, in reality, one from the beginning, whatever the particular dispensation under which God has blessed and dealt with it.

But now S. Paul has three things to say to us about that temptation which, in one form or another, life is and must be to all of us, and which is the particular study of this day. Temptation, we know, is another word for trial. The meaning of both words is the same, and they are the same in the original. It is exploration. It is the putting us to the proof. It is the probing or the sifting which shows what is in us, how much and what kind of natural or acquired evil, how much, if any, of that supernatural good, which is, in other words, the grace of God's Holy Spirit, sought and cherished by diligent prayer. Temptation, how various, how powerful, how sudden, how insidious! Which of us can pretend not to know of it? Which of us, rising at daybreak with the best intentions in the world, has not found himself, many hours before evening, the mark or the

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

sport of some secret agency, he scarcely knows what, suggesting the very evil which he prayed to avoid, and dissipating the very good which he set himself to pursue. It is easy, of course, to give names to this experience. It is easy to parry sinfulness. It is easy to misrepresent the source of these everyday surprises and disappointments. Some men go so far as to call it a mere frame, a mere weakness, mere want of purpose, a mere irresolution of the will. Thus they describe, and truly describe, the condition of the person, but they fail altogether to give any reasonable account of the impulse and the suggestion. What is it that acts upon this weakness? What is it that practises upon this irresolution? The Bible calls it temptation, and, in doing so, it at once warns and comforts, teaches us how great our risks are, but, at the same time, explains that it is an enemy who does this, an enemy who can be resisted in the might of one who is stronger than he. 'Be of good cheer,' Christ says: 'I have overcome.'

I. Though S. Paul would have us be serious, he would not have us to be despondent, and therefore he adds three remarks, three words of encouragement, about this life of trial. 'Do not imagine,' he says, first of all, in the verses which precede the text, 'do not imagine that you are alone in this experience. Your temptation,' he says to all of us, 'is quite common. Every physician of the soul knows it perfectly well. It has not a feature, it is not a symptom, which is not quite familiar.' You think, perhaps, that there is something exceptional, almost unique, in your particular trial. No man was ever quite so circumstanced, exactly so constituted as you are, and you draw from this an inference of discouragement. God must be your enemy so to have made you, or else yours must be sin beyond forgiveness that you have so corrupted yourself. S. Paul thought of all that ministers to this wretched alternative when he writes: 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.' 'The very same trials,' another Apostle says, 'are being accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.' It may seem strange, but it is so, that there is consolation even in the sympathy of faith. It is no selfishness, it is no heartlessness, it is nature as God made it, to find comfort in the fellowship of suffering. On this principle, in part at least, the Cross itself was uplifted. 'In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them.' S. Paul could write, even to dwellers in wicked Corinth, that their temptations were quite common. If you could place yourself in imagination among the first readers of this letter, when it reached the little distant congregation in that voluptuous city, just think how it would strike you. You might have said to yourself, 'I live here in a city wholly given to idolatry. I have in my ears every day the sounds

COMPLETE SERMON

of drum and trumpet summoning me to licentious rites in an idol temple. I am bidden to a feast at which my nearest neighbour is a profligate and a blasphemer. My own house, wife or husband, sister or mother, openly mocks and scoffs at my faith in Jesus, casts out His name as evil, and threatens me with expulsion, at least with excommunication, if I confess it. How can S. Paul tell me that I am under no temptation but the commonest of all? Little can he know, or little can he think of it.'

When we turn from such an effort of fancied identification to our own life, such as we live it, with Christians all around, Christians in the home, Christians in the street, and in the Church, all speaking the same language and all avowing the one faith, bells ringing every Sunday to call us, not to an idol feast, but to Christian worship, ought we not to say, 'I, at all events, cannot call myself exceptionally tempted. I have no excuse if, so placed and so surrounded, I flee or fall.' Yet there is not one person who has not some imaginations of a peculiarity, an overwhelmingness, in his own particular temptation. One says, 'If my disposition were but passionate instead of being sullen!' And another says, 'If my snare were only temper instead of being the flesh!' And another says, 'If I had but a parent who could feel with me, or a husband who was helpful, or if I had a rest, if but for a few days in the year, from this perpetual round of petty annoyances and uncongenial companions, so that I could give myself to the care of my soul and the cultivation of my character, it would be so much easier, oh, so much easier, to be a Christian! But as things are with me, there is a force in my temptation, I am quite sure, which is not common at all. There is a strength beyond my strength in the influence which beats me down, and beats me back.' It is idle to point in detail to the case of this person and that person who, for certain reasons, is worse off than you are; but let the words of a man who brings with him a message straight from God weigh with you in this matter. 'Depend upon it,' S. Paul says, 'whosoever you are, there is more of equality than you reckon in the spiritual circumstances of God's creatures. Temptation is not so disproportioned as you, in your own little instance may imagine. Depend upon it, if you knew all, you would admit it: there hath no temptation taken you but such as is quite common.'

II. S. Paul carries the statement a step onward. He ventures this saying, that, if it were not so, there would be a breach of engagement, where we are quite certain there cannot be, in God Himself. 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength.' If God did suffer this, He would not be faithful. It is like S. John's saying, 'God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' If He did not forgive us, He would not be faithful. His engagement

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

would be broken : He would not be righteous. In both places, you see, it is an engagement in Christ which is spoken of. There is nothing in the religion of nature which binds God to forgive sin, and which would make Him unfaithful if He failed to do so. There is nothing in the religion of reason which binds God to moderate and temper temptation, or which would make Him unjust if He did not do so. There is nothing which reason has to offer why God should not leave the creature who has rebelled to the utmost miseries of that rebellion, to the relentless vengeance of consequence, and the cruel mercies of the tempter. But the gospel, which is God's covenant and compact in Jesus Christ, has introduced new equities and new fidelities. God has promised forgiveness ; God has promised salvation ; therefore He has promised all things that accompany and belong to it—amongst others, strength as the day, and a fatherly hand so guiding that all things work together for good to them that believe. It cannot work for good that a man should be overpowered and overwhelmed with evil ; therefore the promise that the temptation shall be controlled and coerced into an exact adaptation to the individual strength (that is, the strength given—the strength which is another name for grace), is involved and included in the promise that faith shall save, that none shall be put to shame who give themselves into the hand of Christ.

Such is S. Paul's argument. ' You may rely,' he says, ' upon God's control over your temptations, because God is faithful, and because God would not be faithful if He left you to an absolute deluge of evil.' We pause for a moment to say what a serious hue does this give to being tempted ! With many of us it is a light thing that we should fall into temptation. It is but to sin and be sorry, and all will be well again. It is but to fall upon our knees, or not even that, and the sponge shall pass lightly, yet efficaciously, over the tablet of guilty memory, and over the handwriting of the righteous judgment. S. Paul assumes the terribleness of sin, and says that God Himself would be unfaithful if He left you to it.

III. But now, thirdly and lastly, the brief words of the text say another thing. The temptation comes, but with it a way to escape. ' He will with the temptation also make a way to escape.' The promise is not that we shall not be tempted ; no, nor that the natural strength shall be the measure of the temptation permitted. What that is we know—weaker than water. We are aware, so many of us as have lived but a few years of life, how less than the least and lighter than the lightest is the breath of temptation which sweeps away, as in a moment, the force and intensity of will and resolution, of pride and remorse and creature-strength, and gives us to the evil temper, to the sinful passion, to the bosom lust which has been the

COMPLETE SERMON

tyrant of the past, and the gradual former and the moulder of the present. What God promises is, first, the adaptation of the tempting power, not to the natural, but to the supernatural strength; and secondly, the making with the temptation a way also to escape. This word is very remarkable. It is the 'way of escape,' or, more literally still, 'the exit'—'the way out.' It may have happened to one of you on some dull November evening, to find yourself surprised by that transition from twilight to darkness which is so real and sometimes so sudden. You have been, perhaps, in a meadow surrounded by woods. There was one little wicket gate somewhere, you knew, but you could not find it. You went round and round the enclosure, but the light was gone, and you might remain there till morning. Accident or providence at last guided you to it; and then you could understand in a moment what S. Paul here means by the exit, the one way out which makes all the difference between a hopeless entanglement and a remediable perplexity. God will with the temptation, which God does not make, yet to which He says, 'Thus far and no farther,' also make the way out. It is part of the promise to the believer in Christ. If God did not make the exit, He would not be true.

I read the saying quite literally. I believe that your experience and mine will indorse it. There is a moment in every temptation when God makes the exit. There is a pause, more or less conscious, between the suggestion and the execution of every wrong thing, which leaves room for escape. An angry retort, a profane jest, a cruel stab is upon your tongue: it need not become articulate. A passionate impulse is upon you: you need not strike. A sinful desire is in your heart: you need not take that turn which will lead you by the house of danger. You could resist that last volition which is the very doing of the sin itself. When lust conceives it bringeth forth sin; but it takes time. The conception and the birth are separate from each other. That possibility of the non-executing—that pause between the thought and the action—that remarkable moment in all sin (for I venture to speak of it as a thing recognised and universal), that remarkable moment in all sin when the will must bound forth or can refrain from bounding forth to make the deed ill done, is what S. Paul calls the way out, the way to escape, ere yet the net closes all round, and the bait which has beguiled becomes the snare which catches.

Each of these three words has its brief concluding lesson. First, if no temptation is above the common, away with our excuses for being what we are. Do you stand first, do you stand alone, in the ranks of fallen beings, that you should offer temptation as your sufficient plea for a weakness, for a worldliness, for a self-indulgence, for a want of influence and good example which is your shame, which is your

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

misery, which, in your better moments, is your remorse? 'If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how canst thou contend with horses?' is the prophetic question. If in a land of ease and tranquillity, all men speaking one tongue and professing one Saviour, thou hast been unequal to the commonest effort, to the simplest resistance, how canst thou move in the swell of the Jordan? Oh, it is mockery to ask where is the vigour for the reproach or exile, where is the strength for imprisonment or the martyrdom, in one who finds it impossible to coerce an angry temper, or tread underfoot a sinful lust. Despise yourself till, with S. Paul, you are able to say to yourself again and again, 'No temptation has taken me which is not perfectly common.'

Then if God adapts the temptation to the strength, you must pray. It is not the strength of nature, but the strength of grace. There is no promise but to the praying man. You care not to pray: then every temptation, the weakest, the slightest, is above that which we are able. 'Without Me,' Christ says, 'you can do nothing.' 'I can bear all things,' S. Paul says, 'through Christ who strengthens me.'

And finally, when temptation is upon you, look out for the way of escape. It is there: take heed that you miss it not. God makes it: it is yours to watch for it, and it is yours to not lose it. You say, perhaps—and there is something in it, I know—'All is so sudden, so instantaneous. It is done! It is over in a moment. Temptation and yielding are but two indistinguishable phases of the same indivisible instant. Talk not of discussing and arguing. There is no space: there is no time!' I say, years pass in one of those moments, years such as God dwells in, those thousand-year days which make up the moment. Each act of sin is a sort of lifetime, with beginning, middle, end. Youth, manhood, old age, all are there. There may be precipitation in the actor, but the act is a crisis. There is no room in it for debate? There is no room in it for weighing? There is no room in it for judging? Yes, because there is room in it for a prayer. God has not left us without witness, and God has not left us without power. This is God's will, your sanctification. This is God's will, that you should be saved. Therefore trifle not with the acts which make up the being: therefore buy up the opportunity which is the life of time.

'A way to escape': this is what God makes for us with each temptation, and this is what God makes for us in the trial-time as of old. One Saviour, almighty to save, calls Himself the way, the way out and the way in, the way of escape here, and the way of entrance there!

DEAN VAUGHAN.

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

II. OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

'Temptations' Limitations.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.
1 CORINTHIANS X. 13.

I.  EMTATION is to be carefully distinguished from sin. The burden of temptation is hard enough to bear. To fight day by day against the manifold trials and temptations which surround us—this, which is the common lot of all mankind, is no easy burden to bear; but if every solicitation towards evil was a sin staining and defiling the soul, then the burden would be intolerable, and we should have to cry from the very bitterness of our hearts to God who had permitted us to pass through trials and experiences so great. But thanks be to God, it is not so. Oftentimes we look upon our temptations as though they were necessarily and of themselves sin; but if we may venture carefully to distinguish between temptation and sin, we might almost say that when the sin begins the temptation is past. The temptation lasts in the struggle, and the conflict, and the warfare against sin: that is the striving and the proving of our nature; but when there is a compliance with the tempter's will, when there is a yielding of our heart towards the evil that solicits us, then, indeed, the conflict is beginning to pass, then, indeed, the time of trial and struggle is over, and sin begins to work its fatal work. But not every solicitation to evil, not every trial that befalls us—thank God for it—is developed into sin. God enables us in His strength to resist.

II. Notice further, that the trials and temptations through which each soul has to pass are God's discipline to the soul. Through this we have to pass, as the sanctifying process by which the soul is purified from sin and strengthened to endure the conflict and the warfare that may yet remain to us. Temptation is a means of grace, a means of strength.

III. But it is not so much of this aspect of temptation or trial that the Apostle speaks, as of the consolatory thoughts that are suggested by the subject before us. There is a limit imposed upon the temptations to which we are exposed. How comforting it is to feel that our souls are not tossed about at the sport of our malicious foes, that there is a restraining influence and power at work, a limit

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

beyond which the malice of Satan may not pass. And this is of two kinds.

1. First of all you will notice that the Apostle says, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man'—'common to man'—that is, suitable and adapted to our humanity. But this is the very truth which the tried and tempted soul refuses to believe. Go to one who is bowed down with grief and trial and the burdens of this life, and he will tell you that never human soul passed through a conflict so severe; and if you venture to point him to examples of those who have endured temptation, he will tell you of the alleviations which there were to them in their sufferings which are not to be found in his own earthly lot. What is the answer of God's word to such a complaint as this that rises almost naturally to our sinful lips? 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.' Those temptations through which you are passing are divinely appointed and divinely ordered, and have a purpose to fulfil. He who knows what we can bear, who knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust—He who sympathises with our humanity in all its wants, because He Himself has borne the burden of our flesh—He apportions and distributes the burdens which we have to bear, and fits to each one that suitable trial through which he is to pass. In every case cling we to the truth set forth that no temptation hath taken us 'but such as is common to man,' suitable, adapted to man's wants and necessities, and 'God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.'

2. A further limitation is imposed upon the power and force of the temptations to which we are exposed. It is not only that the trials and temptations are adapted to the frailties of our human nature, and to the necessities of man, but God Himself controls and rules in all the events and circumstances of our life. When we are shrinking beneath the burden of our woe, and when our hearts are sore and sad, what a comfort it is to look up, and to be enabled to feel that God who loves us, and has loved us with an everlasting love, has appointed a limit beyond which we may not be tried and tempted, beyond which these sufferings must not pass. We may be tried sorely even to the very last that we can bear, but 'God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it.'

And now to notice further the comfort and the strength which God supplies to those who are passing through the trials and temptations of our earthly pilgrimage. God will not only control the tempter, and apportion the trial, so that it may be suited to our necessities, and may not pass beyond the limit of our endurance, but

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

He will, with His loving hand, comfort and strengthen us, that we may be enabled to endure the trial which is placed upon us to be borne. With the temptation comes the grace to bear it: with the temptation comes the way to escape that we may be able to bear it.

J. F. KITTO.

Hereditary Temptation.

There hath no temptation taken you but such as man may bear; but God is faithful-who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it. I CORINTHIANS x. 13. (Rev. Ver.).

IT is clear from these words that we are tempted by God's permission. It is also clear from a little reflection why this permission is given. It is for the purpose of developing man's character. If there were nothing hard to overcome, we should not be strong. Our whole life is from some point of view a struggle; but it is a struggle in which we have the power to win. It is the mental struggle which gives the student scholarship; it is the physical struggle which gives the athlete strength; it is the financial struggle which gives the rich man wealth; it is in the constant effort to overcome difficulties that the painter finds craft, the writer style, the actor the power to express, and the musician the skill to interpret.

What other trials are to the other sides of man's nature, temptation is to his spiritual life. Without it there would be no stimulus to spiritual exertion; and without spiritual exertion a man's character would be inert, ineffectual, uninteresting, and weak.

Temptation is therefore not an unmixed evil; in some of its aspects it is not an evil at all. God allows it that we may overcome it. It is only by its conquest that we develop and grow strong.

I. And yet God does not suffer us to be tempted beyond what man may bear. It is necessary to urge this statement. It is one which is not seldom contradicted from the popular, or unreflecting, or unreasonable point of view. Many people, of late years, have come to look upon temptation, not as an obstacle to surmount, but as a temperamental trait, to which we have no choice but to yield. There is a tendency to think that a man is born with certain instincts, against which it is useless to fight; that he is as he is, that God made him so, and that he must simply accept himself as he comes from the hands of his Maker. With this there goes an inclination to throw off moral responsibility. It is almost openly declared that we are

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

not answerable for what we are. Nature, temperament, and heredity are made the scapegoats which must bear all the blame of the evil of the individual and the burden of his sin.

It is true that some men come into the world with a predisposition towards wrong. They are born with an impulse to evil quicker than that of others. This cannot be denied. One man's temperament from the beginning turns to what is pure and true, another's to the vicious. What then? What does that imply? That one man has the right to do good because he likes it, and another the right to do evil because he likes that. Surely no! It is only that one man has the more to fight against, and the power to win the more splendid victory.

For he has the power to win. Let no man think he is tempted beyond what he may bear. That is a point to be firmly kept in mind. For men are not seldom told that they are tempted beyond their powers of endurance. They tell themselves, they tell each other, that nature has given us certain tendencies, and we must yield to them; that in our dispositions there are certain inclinations, and we must follow them; and that therefore personal responsibility is removed. It is not true. Out of the experience of all the past of mankind we can boldly declare that whatever may be affirmed, or currently believed, there is no temptation which ever comes to us beyond what man may bear, for God is faithful, and will with the temptation make also a way of escape that we may be able to endure it. If temptation press hard upon us, it is that we may resist it, prove ourselves superior, quit ourselves like men, and be strong.

II. Nothing can lift moral responsibility from our own shoulders, neither nature, nor temperament, nor any transmission through heredity. Heredity has of late years been much studied and discussed. It is doubtless true that many of us have received from generations past a sensitiveness to temptation from which others of us may be comparatively free. The sins of the father are visited on the children by the sending down of an hereditary taint. The profligate sire makes it easier for his son to be a profligate too. This is beyond contradiction. But just here comes into our minds the impulse to say, 'Then, the weaknesses within me are not mine, they are what others have forced upon me; they are the fruits of sins committed long ago. I am the son of a far-reaching line of those who have freely indulged themselves. Their transmitted tendencies have centered right on me. If I do this or that I am but acting according to a law; I am but obeying an irresistible fate. When the last day comes, the just Judge of all will be able to discern in my sin how much is truly mine, and how much belongs to those of the long past from whose blood I spring; and doubtless I shall be acquitted of the blame.'

OUTLINES ON THE EPISTLE

We are becoming prone to speak to ourselves somewhat in this way. But if a man have inherited an evil nature from the past, what is it but the thing he has to fight against? what is he here for but to overcome? A man is not meant to be a creature to lie down in the dust before every obstacle; he is not the prey to every evil prompting within his breast. He has the power to resist, and he must resist, or must suffer in himself the consequence. He is not allowed to hug to his heart his hereditary vice, just because it is hereditary. He cannot justify the sin he commits because others have committed it before him. However many they may have been, with whatever force they have sent down to him the instincts of a long descent of sinners, he is even so not tempted beyond what man may bear. If he yield, the sin is his and his alone. He is here to fight; and no one can relieve him of the task, or shelter him, or take him from the battle. Temptation is his lot, to resist temptation is his duty; and in this resistance lies the making of his character and the proving of himself a man.

III. Every phase of life is the background of this conflict, and furnishes some element to the strife.

The lad goes into school. School has its temptations; it would not be a school had it none. If he be taught not to fear temptation, but to expect and face and fight it, he comes out the stronger.

The youth goes into college. College has its temptations; it would be but a poor sort of university had it none. He is there, outside the shelter of his home, largely for the purpose of meeting temptation; and facing and fighting it, he too comes out the stronger.

We go into business and find temptation there. We enter society and find temptation there. We connect ourselves with churches, and find temptation there. It is there that we may fight it; and we come out the stronger.

For God is faithful, and the way of escape is always open. He who was in all points tempted like as we are knows what help to send to those who need it. All He requires is that we make the effort; His own grace will give the victory. And with each day the strife becomes easier to maintain. The sin resisted once is for ever after less seductive. The battle is fierce at the beginning, but it demands less and less effort as life goes on; till at last it ends, when the development of character is complete, when the testing is perfected, when we have all the strength we need. Then the voice of Jesus welcomes the conquering soul, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!'

W. B. KING.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

III. OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

The Unjust Steward.

And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.
S. LUKE xvi. 1.



SURPRISE is often felt in regard of the parable of the unjust steward, because a wicked man, whose conduct deserves the severest blame, is held up, as in some sense an example to the disciples of Christ. This steward, as you will remember, had been accused to his master of wasting his goods and dissipating his property by mismanagement, or fraud, or extravagance. When the master, in consequence of what he had heard, taxed the steward with his fault, and commanded him accordingly to prepare for resigning the stewardship, there was no attempt whatsoever at vindication. The steward offered no excuse, and we may conclude that he was thoroughly conscious of the justness of the charge, and knew the proofs to be so strong that exculpation was hopeless. When he thus found himself on the eve of being ejected from his lucrative position, he naturally cast about to consider what means of subsistence would be at his command. It does not appear that he had accumulated any property for himself: either his fault had not been so much peculation as profligate expenditure, or what he had dishonestly acquired he had lavishly squandered; but in any case he was likely to be exposed to actual starvation through losing his stewardship. His own account of his prospects was: 'I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.' And now we shall see how utterly devoid this man was of all moral principle. Too proud to beg, he was determined to cheat, framing a plan that was calculated to provide for him during the rest of his life. He called together the debtors of his lord, who are represented as indebted, not in money, but in various articles of common consumption, such as corn and oil. He asked the first, 'How much owest thou unto my lord?' and on being told a hundred measures of oil, he bid him take his bill, and sit down quickly, and make out his contract for fifty. He then took a similar course with a second debtor, and probably reduced in like manner all the outstanding bonds, with as much adroitness as profligacy. He thus contrived to place the debtors in a position of personal obligation to himself,

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

computing that they would hardly refuse him the means of subsistence when his lord should have dismissed him from his stewardship. He did not rely only on their bounty, for this would have been a poor dependence where there was so much moral worthlessness; but he made it to their interest to receive him into their houses. Privy as he was to the deceit which they had practised, he could, at any moment, turn informer against them, and avenge himself at any moment by effecting their ruin. And this shrewdness, or prudence, obtained for the steward the praise or admiration of his master. Indignant though he must have been when he came to know the fraud by which he had been wronged, he could not withhold his confession that the steward had shown singular skill, or had shown himself marvellously an adept at securing his own interest. Accordingly you read, 'And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.' Persons are often staggered by this statement, concluding that Christ Himself is here meant by 'the lord,' and marvel that our Saviour should commend what was manifestly and flagrantly unjust; but it is evident, from the original, that it is not Christ, but the master of the steward that is here represented as commending or praising. Christ does nothing more than relate what took place. He is simply the historian, till, having concluded the narrative, he proceeds to draw the moral in the words, 'And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.' Though if Christ Himself had commended the steward, there would really have been nothing startling in the fact. On what ground is the commendation given? Simply on that of the wisdom or cunning displayed; and the subjoined reason or proposition makes this ground yet more evident: 'For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.' 'The children of this world are wiser'—more prudent for their generation—'than the children of light.' They are greater adepts at providing for their temporal interests—a proposition accurately illustrated by the history in question; and surely one may acknowledge or commend sagacity, prudence, or skill, without being supposed to approve of the action in which it is displayed. I may admire the courage of a pirate, I may applaud the nautical science which he exhibits; but would any one therefore consider that I admired or applauded piracy? Because I commend the cleverness which a robber had shown in working his way into a house, is it for a moment imagined that I commend him for robbing? There is all the difference between praising a man for what he does and praising his manner of doing it. I may abhor the action, and yet admire its wisdom. I may detest fraud, and yet allow its ingenuity. Let it never then be thought—for no opinion can be more groundless—that this parable of the unjust steward goes in

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

any measure to the giving approval of wickedness, as though it sanctioned by commending what is base and dishonest. The steward gains no approval, except as being shrewd and keen-sighted in regard of his temporal interests ; and simply on the principle that a Christian may often take a lesson from a worldling, is his history given as reproaching Christ's disciples, if less on the alert to secure the true riches, or as illustrating the manner in which even they might turn temporal wealth to account. The steward could so contrive to make use of his stewardship as to secure himself a home amongst those whom he had benefited when his master should have ejected him from his house. Let this suggest to Christians—stewards as they are, rather than the proprietors of riches—that there is such a way of employing their wealth as shall make it instrumental to the securing their admission into heaven, when death shall eject them from their stewardships. They may so use worldly riches—here called ‘the mammon of unrighteousness,’ false wealth, that is, as opposed to the true, ‘the pearl of great price’—as to surround themselves at the judgment with advocates and friends who will succeed in securing them admission into everlasting habitations.

I. It would seem, then, that the drift or design of this parable of the unjust steward is to set Christians on regarding temporal wealth as a trust—a trust that may be so worked as to gain for them friends at their final account. The very thing done by the steward may be done by the Christian, in the prospect of dismissal from his stewardship. He managed to place others under an obligation, and would bind them to the giving him shelter and assistance ; and the Christian is distinctly told by our Lord that he has it in his power, and should make it his endeavour, to do the very same, to secure himself friends through ‘the mammon of unrighteousness,’ who, when he dies, may receive him into everlasting habitations.

There is nothing upon which true-hearted Christians are more sensitive—and that, too, very justly—than on any darkening or any narrowing of the great doctrine of Justification by Faith. They are so thoroughly aware that anything of merit must be excluded from human actions, that from first to last salvation must be purely of grace, that they instinctively recoil from statements which in any sense give the justifying office to works, as though, if not absolutely false, they might so readily be abused that it were wiser to abstain from their open avowal ; but nothing can be clearer than that the scheme of theology must be radically wrong which feels uneasy when coming in contact with any portion whatsoever of the Bible. The doctrine which we take for that of Justification by Faith cannot be this doctrine, as given by evangelists and Apostles, if it shrink from admitting that we shall be judged by our works—that good works

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

shall be rewarded, even as evil works shall be punished, when the Judge of quick and dead shall determine men's everlasting portions; for it is the undeniable and uniform representation of Scripture, that we shall be put upon trial for deeds done in the body—that a book is kept, in which our every action is scrupulously registered—and that hereafter this book shall be opened, to furnish the evidence upon which we shall be acquitted or upon which we shall be condemned.

II. There is no inconsistency whatever between such a representation as this and the doctrine that salvation is of grace, through faith; for faith is the principle whence good works must spring, and these works are awarded, not of debt, but of grace. What we shall receive will be all gift, but nevertheless it will be proportioned to the degree in which we have here brought forth the fruits of faith, and therefore will it partake of the nature of reward, though those virtues never partake of the nature of merit. Put, then, the righteous upon trial—a trial, be it carefully observed, in which the matter for inquisition is to be their active benevolence; and why should not those whom their charity has succoured be considered as crowding forward to give evidence? These are the parties of whom they made friends by employing for their benefit the 'mammon of unrighteousness'; and why should they not now throng the tribunal, advocates of the compassionate, as having once been objects of their compassion, and thus prove the right—nay, it is a scriptural expression—'the right' which the charitable have 'to eat of the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city'? It is a glorious and animating prospect which may thus be held out to the possessors of wealth, who, whilst trusting for acceptance exclusively to the merits of Christ, show their love to their Saviour in their kindness to their fellow-men. Their alms and their sacrifices shall not be forgotten; they shall not want witnesses when put on their defence, and required to prove that faith was an active principle, and influenced them continually in their capacity as stewards. The many whom they have succoured in sickness, the starving whom they have fed, the naked whom they have clothed, the ignorant whom they have instructed—these seem to stand at the gate of paradise, not only to welcome them, but to claim their admission. Noble retinue! glorious company of attendants! The great ones of the earth may compass themselves here with courtiers and with guards, but death strips them of their pomp; and if they have not wrought for a heavenly crown whilst wearing an earthly, they must stand alone at the judgment, with none to sustain them, and perhaps with thousands to dismay them. Not so the Christian who devises liberal things; he surrounds himself with attendants, but they are the halt, the maimed, the blind, those ready to perish, and those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Already might he say of himself, as did Job, 'When the ear heard me then it blessed me, and when the eye saw me it gave witness to me'; and death has no power to deprive him of these attendants. Death does but send them forward to wait on him in another scene—a scene of magnificent terror and hope. They shall crowd by his side when he appears at the tribunal of God, with nothing to plead but the merits of Christ, and shall be so instrumental to the proving the workings of a justifying faith, and therefore to the establishing his title to a place in the kingdom, as to show to the letter that, according to the parable before us, friends made of 'the mammon of unrighteousness' may receive those who make them into 'everlasting habitations.'

H. MELVILL.

Saying and Doing.

Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. S. MATTHEW vii. 21.

THESE words remind us of the startling contrast which often exists between our words and our actions, our intentions and their fulfilment.

I. How many things we say, which though perhaps we mean at the time we do not carry out.

1. Our prayers; how much we ask for and yet do not seek by our actions to obtain; how much we promise and never fulfil.

2. 'I said.' What a sad word this often is! 'I said,' but alas, I forgot.

a. 'I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord,' but alas, how cold and unreal the confession was.

b. 'I said, I will take heed to my ways: that I offend not with my tongue.' But how soon I fell back into my old sin of speaking unadvisedly with my lips.

c. 'I said, I will go up to the palm-tree; I will take hold of the boughs thereof.' I said, I will bear my cross patiently, lovingly, but how soon I rebelled under my trials, and tried to escape from the cross.

d. 'I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away, and be at rest.' But I did not use the wings of the Dove, the Holy Ghost, in meditation, to fly away from the strife of earth, and to rest in the true Noah. 'Turn again unto thy Rest (Noah), O my soul.'

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

3. And sadder still our baptismal vows, and their renewal; I said, 'I do,' but how often I have broken them.

II. 'He that doeth the will of My Father.' And this will of God needs to be done daily and in every phase of life.

Remember the parable of the two sons, one of whom said, 'I will not,' but afterward repented and went, the other said, 'I will,' but went not. The former is not set before us as an example of what we should do so much as the latter of what we should not do.

REV. ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.

Mismanagement of Eternal Interests.

The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

S. LUKE xvi. 8.

'THE children of this world are in (for) their generation wiser than the children of light.'

I. No doubt this celebrated maxim is verified in its most literal sense. Worldly people are more quicksighted than Christians as to worldly interests. It is not often that a true Christian is a match for a cunning and unprincipled negotiator in the affairs of this life. His very goodness is against him. Unwilling to think evil, he is unready in counterworking it. His principles forbid him to be suspicious of others or crafty for himself. And if he so far departs from his principles as to become for the moment either the one or the other, the chances are greatly against the success of his inconsistency. He must be a worldly man all over, not for once or in one respect, if he is to be as wise in his generation as those who live for it. Thus it comes to pass that the world has often its laugh against the Christian, and the Christian, if he be a Christian indeed, will scarcely grudge it its triumph. He remembers that world, and can almost let this world go. I shall be satisfied one day, when I awake, with Thy likeness.

But it was not in this light that I specially designed to set the text before you. I would rather read it—so the following verse, I think, directs us—as a serious reflection upon the ordinary management of a Christian life. Not only is a Christian less wise for his generation than the man of this world—that, if that were all, would scarcely be a reproach. It might be, as we have seen, his very Christianity which made him so. But I fear it means also that the children of light are less prudent in the pursuit of their object than the children of this world are in the pursuit of theirs. That he who professes to be living for eternity does not act as wisely with a view

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

to that high and glorious end as he who scarcely aims at anything beyond time with a view to that comparatively low and poor ambition. The children of this world, we may read it, are wiser for their generation than the children of light are for their eternal hope.

II. The wisdom here spoken of is, as the word imports, not an intellectual but a practical quality. It denotes what we call prudence, good-sense, intelligence in adapting means to an end, in pursuing a definite object in a judicious way.

There are many definitions which might be given of a Christian, of him whom our Lord here designates as a child of light. But the one naturally suggested by the topic before us will suffice for our present purpose. A Christian is one who lives for eternity. He is one for whom life and immortality have been brought to light by the gospel. For him therefore heaven as we term it, the state of everlasting blessedness beyond death, is what earth, the present life, the condition on this side the grave, is to others. If he means anything by being a Christian, he means this: I seek a country; I look for a city which hath foundations; I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. That is the aspiration, that is the hope, that is the faith, of a child of light.

But along with this higher and truer aim of life there comes not always, our Lord says, a corresponding wisdom in the choice of means. The children of this world know the way to their end, and they tread that way earnestly.

But how is it meanwhile with the children of light? True, their aim is far higher, and so far it is well with them. But how is it with their aiming? how is it with the accuracy of their eye, the steadiness of their hand, and the strength of their effort? A Christian is one who looks for eternity; how does he live for it? does he act wisely in the prospect of it? is he prudent, is he sensible, in relation to that great object? or does he show such a want of these qualities as would sometimes make a bystander doubt whether he had any definite aim or any sure hope at all?

III. For purposes of self-examination I will guide you to three topics of inquiry.

1. Do you show your wisdom as a child of light by the accuracy of your eye in reference to eternal things?

2. Again I will ask, Is your wisdom as a child of light shown by the steadiness of your hand? Do you not only discern your object clearly and suffer nothing else to distract your eye from it, but also keep a firm hand upon yourself in aiming at it? It is not enough to aim correctly if the hand shakes so that it cannot steady the arrow. It is thus with some Christians in their pursuit of heaven. They have no resolution. They see the object, but they have not firmness

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

to make for it. They have no other object, and yet they cannot secure this. Thus the life of many persons is a constant missing of both worlds.

3. Lastly, I would inquire, Is your wisdom as a child of light shown by the strength of your effort? I ask now, not whether there is any other object in your view, not whether there is any unsteadiness in your self-control, but whether your endeavours after heaven are at all worthy of the thing aimed at, whether you are in any degree showing that earnestness and strength of exertion which a child of light ought to manifest, and which a child of this world so often does manifest, in running the race set before him. It is here, even more than elsewhere, that a Christian often fails and falls behind. He does not, like the children of this world, try one expedient after another in the pursuit of his end. He is not inventive because he is not resolute. Faint expectations and great exertions seldom go together. It is so in things earthly. Give a man hope and you give him zeal, make success doubtful and you destroy endeavour.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

The King dismissing his Steward.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? S. LUKE xvi. 10-11.

NO explanation of the parable of the prodigal was more consistent with this view of its object than that which has been ordinarily adopted. If the younger son who took his portion of goods with him into a far country reminded us of the world beyond the Jewish pale, the elder son who heard the music and dancing at his brother's return and refused to come in showed exactly that temper of mind which our Lord had been detecting and exposing in the Jew himself. His privileges were not underrated. He had been admitted to know the will and purpose of God. All that his father had was his. But if he believed his covenant, he believed that God's will was to bless all the families of the earth. That was the revelation of God which had been made to Abraham and his descendants. That was the call of Abraham and his descendants to work as God's ministers. They showed that they had no desire to see the families of the earth blessed. The blessing of others was an injury to them, a derogation from their rights. Their inheritance as the firstborn was put in peril.

I. What more natural than a transition from a story like that of

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

the prodigal son to one which reminded the Jew that he was not a possessor of divine gifts at all, but merely a steward of them, that his honour as the elder brother was to assist in the distribution of his father's treasures, that if he looked upon his position in any other light, the position would be taken from him, the treasures would cease to be his? Here we have what is at once the most obvious, and, I think, also the deepest meaning of the parable of the steward. Before we notice any particulars in it, let us fix our minds upon that name. For the Jew to believe that he was a steward—for us to believe that we are stewards—is the great necessity, the amazing difficulty. No other, we may depend upon it, is practically so serious, so profound, as that.

If we take firm hold of the thought that we are studying the acts, punishments, resources of a steward, many perplexities of detail in the story disappear, and many opposing notions of it are harmonised. What goods, we ask, are these which the steward was accused of wasting? Were they spiritual or material goods? Was it that knowledge of the divine mind and purpose which has been imparted to the sons of Abraham; was it the gold and silver which they might share in and traffic with like the other nations? The passage I took for my text gives the answer. The same law applies to both. 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.' The second clause defines more clearly the doctrine of the first. 'If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?' Mammon must be the lord of both worlds if he is the lord of either. If we admit him to make our earth for us, he will also make our heaven. The spirit of covetousness will be content with no half service, no divided allegiance. And in like manner our Lord teaches that the Spirit of love will be content with no half service, no divided allegiance. He asks for the little and the much; He asks to be owned as giving us our stewardship both in the unrighteous mammon and in the true riches, in all tangible as well as in all unseen treasures. Do not, then, let us try to separate in Christ's parables words which it is the very purpose of a parable to show us must be joined together. The outward and visible is always the sign of the inward and spiritual, whether grace or ungraciousness. The steward had wasted goods of both kinds; he had claimed them both as his own.

II. The instinct of seeking friends, our Lord says, is a right instinct. He would cultivate it in His disciples. He would use the steward's example to show how the blessing is to be won. The steward had done wisely. Having given himself to mammon, he had served mammon thoroughly. Having set before himself the object of

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

winning men's favour, he had given himself up, soul and body, to that object. Could not they do the like? Might not they surrender themselves as heartily to the Spirit of love, as he had surrendered himself to the rival spirit? Could they not buy an everlasting home in men's hearts by showing them the truth, by delivering them from lies, as he had won a temporary home in their houses by disguising from them the truth, by encouraging them in lies? Might they not compel the god whom he worshipped, the unrighteous mammon, to be an instrument in their service?

F. D. MAURICE.

The Unjust Steward.

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? S. LUKE xvi. 10-12.

I. **T**HE passage in which these words occur forms the moral of that instructive lesson which our Lord wished to point out as arising from the parable of the unjust steward which you have read this morning. And although it must be confessed that this is one of the most difficult of the parables the blessed Jesus spoke to His followers, the words I have chosen come forcibly to our aid in explanation of it. Nothing indeed can be more clear than the expressions He makes use of when carefully and attentively considered. 'He that is faithful in that which is least'—in the most trifling things committed to his care, will no doubt be faithful in things of greater value. 'He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon'—in the riches and possessions of this world, by so employing the talents committed to your charge, that they shall be profitable to you not only in the present time but hereafter also; if you dispense not those blessings which have been given to you, in furthering the purposes for which they were given, to the glory of the Giver and to your own eternal advantage; if you have been unfaithful in your trust in the 'mammon of unrighteousness,' in the search after those worldly treasures so often obtained by unrighteous means, instead of considering their higher and better purposes—'who will commit to your trust the true riches,' those blessings which ennoble and sanctify the soul for ever? Some care is, however, very needful in the present examination of this parable lest we should misplace the expressions used, and make it appear that our Saviour commanded that which He could not but disapprove. Thus, for example, we must by no

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

means understand our Lord in this parable (as some have done) to mean the Lord Jesus Christ, but only the master of this steward. Nor must we in contemplating His behaviour suppose that when He commended the unjust steward our Lord intended to lend His sanction to injustice. On the contrary, it is not only shown that the steward was dishonest but that he was punished for being dishonest, for he was going to be discharged for his unfaithfulness. It is also shown that he hoped to derive some benefit from his fraud, but that like all dishonesty it exposed him to shame in the end, and involved him in distress. Aware that his conduct would not bear investigation, he was anxious before the discovery was made to gain the goodwill of those who dealt with his master, that he might, when destitute, be received into their houses. That object he sought to attain by giving back to them a portion of their debts. Some, indeed, in their explanation of this parable have imagined that the steward being no longer unjust was not to be considered further to blame, but if we look attentively at the narrative we shall not anywhere observe the slightest acknowledgment of his offence, or the least appearance of any change of mind in him. It was impossible therefore that any praise should have been due to him. But though the master disapproved of the steward's dishonesty, he could not restrain his admiration for his cleverness. It was not for his dishonesty that he commended him, but for his sagacity.

II. The child of this world pursues with steadiness objects which, though tangible, are but transient and of little immediate value. The child of light seeks for a treasure that no moth can corrupt, that no thief can steal; and yet with all that he is often surpassed and outdone by the followers after this world's good. And if so, how true is that observation of our Saviour's that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.' But then there arises a question of the greatest consequence to each of us, 'How am I to know to which of these descriptions I belong: whether I am a child of light or not?' This can alone be answered by satisfactory replies to such inquiries as the following: 'Am I seeking the kingdom of God? Do I regard all things here with the indifference of a guest caring only for the day? Do I commit everything I have, and do, to God's care and blessing, feeling that without this it cannot prosper? Do I use aright God's manifold gifts to me? Do I leave to Him all the events of my life? Is my acceptance by Him at the last day my great concern on earth? Am I faithful in that which has been given to me, the "unrighteous mammon," that I may in the end attain the "true riches"?'

Like the steward in the parable we shall one day be called upon to give an account of our stewardship and of the use we have made of

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

the talents that have been given to us. Let then that part of this steward's character which is held out for our imitation be well considered. The more the difficulties, the greater be our exertions to meet them, and while carefully avoiding every approach to the steward's injustice, let us but imitate his caution and energy, and we shall be rewarded in a far better and nobler manner. You have been called out of darkness into His marvellous light, and you must therefore cast off the works of darkness and walk as children of light. You must become more holy in your pursuits, in your tempers, and in your inclinations; and if you would more frequently turn your attention to that Cross upon which the Son of God was nailed for your sakes, to the stripes with which He was afflicted for your healing, to the blood which He shed to wash away your sins, then every wicked thought would be nipped in its bud, every polluting desire would be sacrificed, and your whole souls, and hearts, and bodies would be kept in obedience to His will.

CANON NEPEAN.

The Mammon of Unrighteousness.

Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles. S. LUKE xvi. 9.

THE Authorised Version of the New Testament is still predominantly in use amongst us, and it is probable that an indefinite number of readers continue to be misled by its way of rendering this passage. Certainly it is constantly assumed in popular speech and in the newspapers that to 'make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness' means to make friends with mammon, to come into some sort of alliance or compromise with mammon. It is not to be supposed that the translators intended to convey that sense. To make friends of mammon could hardly be the same thing as to make a friend of mammon. There are other sayings of our Lord in which the word 'of' is misleading; as in 'My kingdom is not of this world,' 'I speak not of Myself.' In these places 'from' would express the sense better to our ears: 'My kingdom is not from this world,' 'I speak not from Myself.' In our text we need the unambiguous form which the revisers have given us. What our Lord said was, 'Make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness,'—'let the mammon of unrighteousness be to you a means of making friends.'

It is important that the saying should be rightly understood, for it is of singular significance and value. It does not, indeed, give us, what many of us may often have craved, practical directions as to the

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

manner in which we should deal with money, or money's worth, which may come into our possession. Our Lord took care to avoid putting into the hands of His disciples what they might regard and use as a directory of conduct. When He delivered practical precepts they were often in such a form that they could not be, and were manifestly not intended to be, observed in the letter. A vivid precept of action may be the most telling expression of a principle, and our Lord would have us look through every precept of His to the principle, the motive, the reason, behind it. What He sought to do, and did, was to declare principles to those who would accept Him as master. And in this moral of the parable of the unrighteous steward Christ gave to His disciples a profound and comprehensive law for the employment of money. They were to make friends by means of it. In what particular ways they were to seek this end He does not lay down; He leaves to them the duty of finding out the best ways. But for every generation and in all kinds of circumstances it is a luminous principle, that those who have money are to aim at making friends by the ways in which they use it.

I. The story of which the parable consists was probably told for the sake of this moral only. A parable may, or may not, be susceptible of interpretation through all its parts. We are not at all bound to assume that the rich man stands for any one in the spiritual world, or the steward, or the debtors; or that the acts of the story—the wasting of the goods, the calling of the steward to account, his dealing with his lord's debtors—have spiritual acts analogous to them, which they are intended to bring to our minds. Our Lord called attention to the one lesson which He desired to convey. As the dishonest steward had sought by dishonest means to provide himself with friends against the time of destitution which was coming upon him, so the children of light were bidden to provide themselves, by a worthy use of money, with friends for the time when money should fail them. Without pronouncing that the parable has no other less obvious interpretation, it is reasonable that we should give our attention first and chiefly to the lesson to which our attention is called. And the reflections which follow this lesson will confirm us in believing that our Lord intended to declare, not merely one use to which money might well be put, but the comprehensive purpose for which money is intrusted to men. 'If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?' Every man, according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, is made to be a slave of God. God intrusts to each certain possessions, of which he is allowed to have the control and disposal. He is bound to be faithful in the admini-

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

stration of these. And what the true Lord of the possessions and of the man sets him to do with them, is to make friends by means of them.

II. It is a noticeable feature of this teaching of Jesus Christ that He speaks of money, for we may conveniently designate all external possessions by the name of money, as the mammon of unrighteousness, the unrighteous mammon. Mammon, it is said, meant simply riches, and is a neutral word, and money would therefore be a fair equivalent of it. To us it might be said, Ye cannot be slaves to God and to money. But our Lord in His expressions makes money the natural ally or instrument of unrighteousness. Obviously He must have meant to recognise or to complain that this was, as a matter of fact, a character of money. Let money, he says, which is so habitually associated with unrighteousness, be in your hands a means of making friends. This is one example of that open and direct prejudice against riches which the Lord Jesus entertained and expressed. The Pharisees, who hated Him and whom He defied and denounced, had it for one of their characteristics that they were rich and loved money. Poor men, it was seen, could more easily become followers of Jesus than rich men; and He took note with anger and emphasis of this fact, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God, to become My disciple.' Those whom He addressed were familiar with the unrighteousness, the dishonesty, the strifes, the worldliness, the inhumanity, of which the pursuit of money was the cause or occasion; and Jesus had no desire to palliate these evil fruits or to make the least of them. He thought it expedient and rather safe than dangerous to refer to money as if it were itself an evil thing. He sought to encourage what we might call a prejudice against it in the minds which were open to His teaching. If the rich and the poor were on two sides He would take the side of the poor against the rich. He taught those who wished to do the will of the Heavenly Father with regard to money to look at it with suspicion.

In this day of ours, in which we see champions of the poorer classes insisting on social changes with a peremptory confidence which takes the breath of older persons away, we may hear riches and the rich denounced with a freedom which is sometimes compared with that of Christ. Bold and generous spirits, chiefly of course amongst the young, instead of treating money with the traditional respect, are assuming it to be the root of almost all the evil in the world. By money I mean the personal owning of possessions. To get rid of this, it is held, would be to reform the world, to make all men happy. Some, in a half-and-half way, would stop short at the abolition of the personal owning of land; others are more thorough and would

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

forbid the owning of things in general. It is clear, indeed, that the maleficent power of money would be in no degree broken by the abolition of property in land. And the philosophical speculators who anticipated the extreme Socialists of to-day, and who, seeing the many evils which might be referred to the influence of money on the senses and imagination of men, were tempted to take the short course of destroying the occasion of such evils, undertook to construct commonwealths in which no man should have anything which he could call his own. There is no Hyde Park demagogue who condemns private property with more decision than Plato, the scornee of the demos, or Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor of England. Let me quote a few sentences from a bishop's translation of More's *Utopia*: 'I must say that, as I hope for mercy, I can have no other notion of all the governments that I see or know, than that they are a conspiracy of the rich, who on pretence of managing the public, only pursue their private ends, and devise all the ways and arts they can find out: first, that they may without danger preserve all that they have so ill acquired, and then that they may engage the poor to toil and labour for them at as low rates as possible, and oppress them as much as they please. . . . Yet these wicked men, after that they have by a most insatiable covetousness divided that among themselves with which all the rest might have been well supplied, are far from that happiness that is enjoyed among the Utopians; for, the use as well as the desire of money being extinguished, much anxiety and great occasion of mischief is cut off with it. And who does not see that the frauds, thefts, robberies, quarrels, tumults, contentions, seditions, murders, treacheries, and witchcrafts, which are indeed rather punished than restrained by the severities of the law, would all fall off, if money were not any more valued by the world? Men's fears, solitudes, cares, labours, and watchings, would all perish in the same moment with the value of money; even poverty itself, for the relief of which money seems most necessary, would fall.' 'When I balance all these things in my thoughts, I grow more favourable to Plato, and do not wonder that he resolved not to make any laws for such as would not submit to a community of all things; for so wise a man could not but foresee that the setting all upon a level was the only way to make a nation happy, which cannot be obtained so long as there is property.' The Utopians are said to have been attracted to Christianity by the fact that Christ and His followers lived by their rule of having all things common, and that the rule was still kept up in some communities amongst the sincerest sort of Christians. And it is charged against the later preachers of Christianity, that 'they, observing that the world would not willingly suit their lives to the rules that Christ has given, have fitted His

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

doctrine, as if it had been a leaden rule, to their lives, that so some way or other they might agree with one another.'

It cannot be disputed that Christ saw and noted the evils which have been associated with money no less seriously than those who before Him and after Him have advocated as the only effectual cure of those evils the extinction of money. His example also may be claimed, in that He and His band of followers had for a time a common purse. And there cannot but be the most solemn significance in the impulse which moved the thousands of believers on the Day of Pentecost to throw their possessions into a common stock. It is equally true, however, that Christ did not ordain that His followers should have all things common. There is no evidence of His having issued any such command. The precepts of conduct which He did give to His followers expressly imply that they would possess personal property. A man could not give alms, could not lend, could not invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind to a dinner unless he had means of his own.

We recognise then in money, in the owning of little or much, an extremely serious instrument of temptation. It may cause us to fall; it may do us harm, and we may do harm with it. What is our Lord's counsel with regard to it? not that this occasion of evil should be destroyed, not that each should for himself refuse to take it, but that we should make friends by means of it.

III. It is God's will that men should be friends together; so the Son of God reports of His Father's mind. Yes, the God who made money to tempt men, wills that they should make friends of each other. Across all the jealousies and strifes and hatreds and mutual injuries which have seemed so natural to men, this higher law has at all times been felt and even discerned. The divisions have been the more superficial: the uniting forces have been the deeper and more permanent. Every man, it has been acknowledged, ought to be a friend to every man. There is something wrong when men quarrel and try to harm each other. The true Maker of men has willed, and continues to will, that they should not be enemies, that they should not be indifferent to each other, that they should be friends. All the natural occasions of mutual assistance, all the reasons for combination, all the gratification that one is able to afford to another—these are indications and works of that higher purpose which designs that men should be drawn together by ties of sincere goodwill and desire of each other's welfare. Before Christ came, the chosen people had been hearing a voice saying to them, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. This old commandment was issued again as new by Jesus to His disciples, for they were to love one another as He had loved them; their love was to be an imitation of the love which the

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Heavenly Father had shown in Christ, a response to that love, a fruit of it. Jesus said to His disciples, Love not your friend only, but your enemies also ; love them whilst they are in the act of injuring you. The purpose of the Creator of mankind was to be fulfilled by a universal goodwill between man and man, and for this end a persistent divine influence was to work in men's hearts, which would not suffer itself to be quenched by any ingratitude or malice, but would resolutely set itself to conquer evil with good. If friends were to be made by the use of money, it was because to make friends was to be the aim of all communications between man and man, because every man was intended to feel as a friend towards his neighbour, and to desire that his neighbour should feel as a friend towards him. Only through the relation of men to God and of men to each other in God is human life in any of its parts to be thoroughly understood.

But it may be said that to make friends was not the final object set by the Lord before His hearers, but to obtain admission into the eternal tabernacles. According to the parable, if the dishonest steward tried to put certain persons under an obligation to him, it was with a view to his and our advantage. It cannot be denied that our Lord's precept might with some plausibility be thus interpreted : Give money freely to pious persons, that you may win the reward of going with them to heaven. Most of us would not willingly, I think, lower the Lord's precept to such a sense as this. We have learnt to regard the habit of giving to the Church, and of doling out the charity which means alms for the sake of gaining an entrance into abodes of bliss after death, as an unworthy kind of religion. What S. Paul would have thought of it, we may infer from his vehement protest, 'If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.' Yes, and what Christ would have thought of it may be inferred from another parable of His, with which He enforced another lesson. His eager disciple, Simon Peter, having heard Him speak with unusual emphasis of the hindrance which riches put in the way of those who might have followed Him, reminded his Master, 'Lo, we have left all and followed Thee, what shall we have therefore?' And this claim of reward grieved the Lord Jesus. All genuine surrender, He replied, would be richly rewarded ; but there might be apparent surrender which would not win God's favour. There were first that might be put last. And the disciple who should plead 'I have sacrificed much more than most men, and hope I may be proportionately rewarded,' would find himself rebuffed. The divine rewards were not to be given according to any external scale of labour or surrender, but would pour confusion upon such measurement. We shall not

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

readily believe therefore that our Lord taught His disciples to give largely for the sake of securing happiness after death.

It seems probable, certainly, that our Lord was referring to what might happen after death. If the old reading 'when ye fail,' had held its ground, the failing would be taken as a matter of course to mean disappearance from this life. And the failing of the mammon may be most naturally supposed to occur at the moment of death. There are other sayings of our Lord which point in this direction. To the rich man who planned the comfortable enjoyment of his riches, 'God said, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee, and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?' 'When thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just'; 'If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' I admit, therefore, that in these words 'that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles,' we shall reasonably read a promise of reward after death. What I would urge is, that we must understand the promised reward in the light of our Lord's teaching concerning service and recompense; and that the emphasis of the precept is upon the making of friends. A faithful administration of possessions, as a trust, is what Christ demands, and He indicates a higher gift which will reward proved faithfulness. 'If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?' The higher endowment, which is much, is true or genuine, is your own, must be spiritual treasure; it must consist in knowledge of God, in godly affections, in pure fellowship, in worthy joy. And it is not our Lord's custom to speak of such treasure as belonging exclusively to the life after death. Spiritual endowment is not withheld from men in this life; the kingdom of heaven was for this world as well as for the next. We should not therefore be departing from the characteristic method of Christ's teaching, if we were to adopt an interpretation of His precept which understands Him as saying, 'Use the money which God gives you for Him, not for yourselves, and it will bring in friends who will not merely give you the temporary refuge which the cast-off servant sought, but will receive you in your hours of weakness and sorrow into their very heart of hearts, will bear you with them when they are kneeling in the presence of their Father.' Whatever Christ promises for the future life has a foretaste possible in this life. 'Make to yourselves friends,' Christ says, 'with whom you may have the fellowship of the higher

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

world; friends to whom your relations will be not of a worldly but a heavenly kind. And use money, which may be so easily misused, to knit such friendship.'

J. LLEWELLYN DAVIES.

'The Follies of the Wise.

The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light. S. LUKE xvi. 8.

I. **W**E may look, first, at the two classes which our Lord opposes here to one another.

'The children of the world' would have, for their natural antithesis, the children of another world. The 'children of light' would have, for their natural antithesis, 'the children of darkness.' But our Lord so orders His words as to suggest a double antithesis, one member of which has to be supplied in each case, and He would teach us that whoever the children of this world may be, they are 'children of darkness'; and that the 'children of light' are so, just because they are the children of another world than this. Thus He limits His praise, because it is the sons of darkness that, in a certain sense, are wiser than the enlightened ones. And that is what makes the wonder and the inconsistency to which our Lord is pointing. We can understand a man being a consistent, thorough-paced fool all through. But men whose folly is so dashed and streaked with wisdom, and others whose wisdom is so spotted and blurred with folly, are the extraordinary paradoxes which experience of life presents to us.

The children of this world are of darkness; the children of light are the children of another world. The children of light are so in the measure in which their lives are not dependent exclusively upon, nor directed solely towards, the present order and condition of things. If there be a *this*, then there is a *that*. If there be an age which is qualified as being present, then that implies that there is an age or epoch which is yet to come. And that coming 'age' should regulate the whole of our relations to that age which at present is. For life is continuous, and the coming epoch is the outcome of the present. As truly as 'the child is father of the man,' so truly is Eternity the offspring of Time, and that which we are to-day determines that which we shall be through the ages. He that recognises the relations of the present and the future, who sees the small, limited things of the moment running out into the dim eternity beyond, and the track unbroken across the gulfs of death and the broad expanse

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

of countless years, and who therefore orders the little things here so as to secure the great things yonder, he, and only he, who has made time the lackey to eternity, and in his pursuit of the things seen and temporal, regards them always in the light of things unseen and eternal, is a child of light.

I. The second consideration suggested here is the limited and relative wisdom of the fools.

The children of this world, who are the children of darkness, and who at bottom are thoroughly unwise, considered relatively, 'are wiser than the children of light.' The steward is the example. 'A rogue is always,' as one of our thinkers puts it, 'a round-about fool.' He would have been a much wiser man if he had been an honest one; and, instead of tampering with his lord's goods, had faithfully administered them.

But, shutting out the consideration of the moral quality of his action, look how much there was in it that was wise, prudent, and worthy of praise. There were courage, fertility of resource, a clear insight into what was the right thing to do. There was a wise adaptation of means to an end. There was promptitude in carrying out the wise means that suggested themselves to him. The design was bad. Granted. We are not talking about goodness, but about cleverness. So, very significantly, in the parable the person cheated cannot help saying that the cheat was a clever one. The 'lord,' although he had suffered by it, 'commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.'

Now, I draw a very simple, practical lesson, and it is just this, that if Christian men, in their Christian lives, would practise the virtues that the world practises, in pursuit of its shabby aims and ends, their whole Christian character would be revolutionised.

III. Lastly, note the conclusive folly of the partially wise.

'In their generation,' says Christ; and that is all that can be said. The circle runs round its 360 degrees, and these people take a segment of it, say forty-five degrees, and all the rest is as non-existent. If I am to call a man a wise man out and out, there are two things that I shall have to be satisfied about concerning him. The one is, what is he aiming at? and the other, how does he aim at it? In regard of the means, the men of the world bear the bell, and carry away the supremacy. Let in the thought of the end and things change. Two questions reduce all the world's wisdom to stark, staring insanity. The first question is, What are you doing it for? And the second question is, And suppose you get it, what then? Nothing that cannot pass the barrier of these two questions satisfactorily is other than madness, if taken to be the aim of a man's life. You have to look at the end, and the whole circum-

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

ference of the circle of the human being, before you serve out the epithets of 'wise' and 'foolish.'

I need not dwell on the manifest folly of men who give their lives to aims and ends of which I have already said that they are disproportioned to the capacity of the pursuer. Look at yourselves, brothers; these hearts of yours that need an infinite love for their satisfaction, these active spirits of yours that can never be at rest in creatural perfection, these troubled consciences of yours that stir and moan inarticulately over unperceived wounds until they are healed by Christ. How can any man, with a heart and a will, and a progressive spirit and intellect, find what he needs in anything beneath the stars? 'Whose image and superscription hath it? They say unto Him, Cæsar's'; we say, 'God's.' 'Render unto God the things that are God's.' The man who makes anything but God his end and aim is relatively wise and absolutely foolish.

Let me remind you, too, that the same sentence of folly passes, if we consider the disproportion between the duration of the objects and of him who makes them his aim. You live, and if you are a wise man, your treasures will be of the kind that last as long as you. 'They call their lands after their own name; they think that their houses shall continue for ever. They go down into the dust. Their glory shall not descend after them,' and, therefore, 'this, their way, is their folly.'

A. MACLAREN.

Rich and Poor ; or, The Friendship of Mammon.

Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. S. LUKE xvi. 9.

THERE can be no doubt that our blessed Lord greatly preferred the poor, as a class, to the rich. In looking round to see what kind of persons would be likely to satisfy those conditions of simplicity, singleness of heart and purpose, earnestness, directness of faith, sincerity and unreservedness of love which He required for the new society or kingdom which He was founding on the earth, He observed that these qualities were far more spontaneous and unfettered amongst those who had little means for the cultivation of the unspiritual pleasures of this life than amongst those who had every conceivable temptation to habitual self-indulgence. The words of our Lord are not much in fashion in our times, and they are constantly explained away. But this quiet, firm, unworldly attitude of His mind cannot be seriously denied. One of the most important counsels of His most important, characteristic, and typical Sermon on the Mount was that any who wished to be His disciples must 'not

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

lay up for themselves treasures upon earth, because where their treasure was there would their heart be also.' In the same sense He told them on another occasion, with His gracious, unquestionable, unhesitating authority, that it was not for them to 'labour in any way for the meat which perisheth'; and again, that they were to 'take no trouble about the future, what they were to eat or drink or to wear.'

And I do not think that much comfort will be found by those who fancy that it was necessary for our Lord to be stern in order to suit the special circumstances of a unique crisis, but that the Apostles after Him would accommodate themselves more genially to general society. S. Paul follows exactly the same line: 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after they had erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.' S. James has a very vigorous cut at the worldly spirit, which is so powerful an enemy of our spiritual life at this very hour, in his description of the two men going to church, one with a gold ring and goodly apparel, the other a poor man in vile raiment, and the very different reception which they got. And then he makes a touching appeal to them: 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?' But his remarks about the rich are by no means encouraging. In another place he addresses such of them as were selfish and self-indulgent in language of the boldest vigour: 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.' S. John, the apostle of love, cuts the ground away from the feet of those who spend their incomes on themselves, with no less clearness and severity: 'Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?'

I. Our Lord and His Apostles did not take this depreciatory view of the value of money to the individual on account of the poor, that they might have the benefit of superfluities, but for the sake of the rich themselves, for their character, their spirituality, their chance of becoming members of the kingdom, their hopes of heaven.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His infinite pity and His divine wisdom, badly as He thought of the natural condition of the rich, would not leave them without hope. He strongly preferred the poor, and

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

urgently advised all rich people to divest themselves of those unspiritual cares which would in most cases make their reward a very small one in the kingdom of heaven. But He saw that all would not do this, and He was willing to leave them in the possession of their wealth on one condition. They were to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Mammon means wealth; they were to use their wealth as trustees of God and as stewards for the poor. If they must keep such dangerous and poisonous materials in their own hands, that was the only means they would have at once of escaping from the snares and slavery of the world, and of proving their devotion to their God. That is the gospel for the rich, and that is their difficulty, to have in their hands all the means of luxury and self-indulgence, of amusement and pleasure, and yet not to use them for themselves; to be surrounded by pagan friends and acquaintances, who are devoting all their energies to the refinements of civilisation, and yet to be themselves wholly given to the doing of good. That is the touchstone of the rich, and that is God's divine remedy for the sufferings and inequalities which men have brought upon themselves by their recklessness, their follies, their sins, and the futility of their arrangements. Our blessed Lord never gave the slightest encouragement to Socialism. The wealth of the rich was not to be taken away from them for the good of the rest. They were to have the responsibility of keeping it in their own hands. All was to be purely voluntary.

II. The power of Christian wealth. There is a canting spirit going about in these days which pretends that no good can be done by money, but that everything must be achieved by personal effort. This foolish boast is merely the combined result of conceit on the part of those who have not the money to give, and of hypocrisy on the part of those who have the money but do not like to give it. 'If there were none of these maligned rich people,' wrote a sensible American lady, 'who would build hospitals, and provide asylums for orphans, and for the deaf and dumb and the blind?' It would be the impertinence of levity to deny that the million of George Peabody has been an incalculable blessing to the artisans of London. Those who would take from the rich their hope and consolation of doing good are about as wise as those other perverse and pedantic wiseacres, who think that all evils can be cured by a judicious and extended administration of the poor-law, and who, if they had their way, would soon make all Christian virtue to consist in a patient submission to the many burdens of a constantly increasing taxation.

ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR.

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

Stewardship.

Give an account of thy stewardship. S. LUKE XVI. 2.

THE point on which we have first of all to fix our mind is the exact idea which the word *steward* is intended to convey. A steward, all the world over, and at all times, is a man who administers a property which is not his own. This, we may be sure, was the occupation of Eliezer of Damascus, the oldest steward known to history, the steward of the house of Abraham. Eliezer brought with him, it would seem, from the ancient Syrian city, the experience and knowledge which enabled him to preserve and to augment the flocks and herds and movable utensils of the wandering patriarch. But Eliezer had no thought of joint proprietorship in the possessions of Abraham. He was probably a slave, or, at any rate, an unpaid servant, who found his reward in the supply of his own daily needs, which was thus secured for him, and still more in the trust reposed in him by his master, and the frequent and intimate intercourse which it implied. And so it has been with stewards ever since down to our own day. The steward's relation to property is distinguished on the one hand from that of those who have nothing to do with the property, because the steward has everything to do with it that he can do for its advantage, and on the other hand from that of the owner of the property, because the steward is in no sense the owner of it, but only the administrator, his duty towards it is dependent on the will of another, and it may terminate at any moment. You remember how, in *Richard III.*, Shakespeare marks the difference, as it was anciently understood, between the King of England and any who acted for or under him:

Take on you the charge
And kingly government of this your land,
Not as protector, steward, substitute,
Or lowly factor for another's gain.

And as with the progress of years the nature of property has become inevitably more complex than it was in simple times, the duty of taking care of it has been more and more largely delegated by its real owners to others who represent them, and great estates and great commercial companies—indeed, every considerable accumulation of wealth—is almost as a matter of course committed to the care of some person or persons who, in fact, are stewards. The steward, whatever he may be called, is, at least, as familiar a personage in the modern as he ever was in the ancient world.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Now, what is the central idea of such an office as a steward's? It is before all things a trust. It represents in human affairs a venture which the owner of a property makes upon the strength of his estimate of the character of the man to whom he delegates the care of the property. It is an assumption, it may be a warranty, it may be a precarious or unsound assumption, that the risk is a justifiable one, and that a generous confidence will not be abused. We know how fully this confidence was justified in the case of the ancient steward to whom reference has been already made. The difficult and delicate mission to Padan-Aram in quest of a wife for Isaac amongst the kinsfolk of Abraham was carried out by Eliezer with a loyal faithfulness which contributes one of its most beautiful episodes to the book of Genesis. We know how it was abused by the steward in the parable, who may not have been a wholly imaginary person, but the actual administrator of an estate in ancient Palestine; and we have not, alas, to tax our memories very greatly in order to recall examples of a great abuse of a great trust resulting in the misery and ruin of hundreds of persons who had placed their little property in the keeping of some one who had no sense of the sacredness of the obligations of his position. Of this let us be sure, that as no greater honour, because no more practical proof of good opinion can be done by one man to another than is done when trust or confidence is practically reposed in him, so no greater wrong can be done, nothing more calculated to destroy all good understanding, or, indeed, all permanent social relations between man and man, than a breach of trust. To repose trust in another is an act of generosity, and to betray that trust when so reposed is an act of baseness proportionate to the nature and the greatness of the trust reposed. This is the first idea attaching to a steward's office—it is a trust. The second is that it is a discharge—an account must at some time be rendered to some one. This accountability of the steward to some one lies in the nature of things, a steward with no account of his work to render is morally as well as socially an inconceivable personage. The liability to give an account can only be avoided when nothing has been received from another, and when, consequently, there is no basis of trust. Strictly speaking, one being alone, He from whom all else proceeds, He who owes nothing to any besides Himself, is not liable to give an account of His administration. The lower being, who merely takes oversight of and does what he can with that which is not originally and properly his own, he must, at some time or other, in some way or other, to some one or other, give an account. Upon no subject is the verdict of the conscience of man, when moderately healthy, more unvarying, more peremptory in its judgment, than this, that every office of the nature of a trust must be ultimately

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

accounted for. The human conscience, our human elementary sense of justice, had not to wait for the gospel to know that every steward, sooner or later, must give an account of his stewardship. But then if an account is to be given, it must be given to somebody, it cannot be given to a product of the imagination, to an abstract idea, to an unborn posterity. In this metropolis of business there is no need to insist on so obvious a truth; every account that is kept for others must be audited by somebody, every trustee is liable to answer for mismanagement of his trust in a Court of Law. Is it otherwise, think you, in the moral, the spiritual world? We are accountable, some one suggests, to public opinion. But then public opinion is guided by a very variable standard of duty, and as regards the actions, the private actions, and still more the motives of men it sees, can see a very little way. We are accountable, then, it is suggested, to our own consciences. Yes, but what if our consciences are corrupt judges, what if the conscience has been bribed by the passions, what if it has been silenced by the rebellious will? If our accountability, as human beings, for our thoughts and acts and words in the various relations of life is to be something more real than a phrase of literature, there must be a judge who knows too much of us to make mistakes about our characters, who is too just when he tries us to do anything but right. Perhaps the deepest of all differences between man and man is that which divides the man who does in his secret heart believe that he is a steward who has an account to give, from the man who does not. With the one man there is a very prevalent motive of an almost incalculable power, entering into the recesses and the secrets of life; he is constantly asking himself, 'How will this look at the day of judgment; what is the Eternal Judge thinking of it now?'

What a view of the destiny of Christians is implied in that one sentence of S. Paul: 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.' What an estimate of the real condition of the heathen world, lying in its polished ungodliness all around him, escapes in those words of S. Peter: 'They shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.' What a deep, if unusual idea of the work of the ministers of Christ is that apostolic saying, 'They watch for your souls as they that must give account.' Everywhere in the New Testament this belief in man's accountability meets us. Not an abstract accountability of some vague, unknown power, but the clear and certain fact that we, each one of us, one day shall have to account to a living Judge, and when this conviction is wanting how enormous is the difference in the whole range of thought and action! If man has no account to give, no wrong that he does has the least consequence. If man has no account to give, no wrong that is done to him, and that is unpunished by human law, will ever be

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

punished. If man has no account to give, life is a hideous chaos; it is a game of chance in which the horrible and the grotesque alternately bury out of sight the very last vestiges of a moral order. If man has no account to give, the old Epicurean rule in all its profound degradation may have much to say for itself: 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'

Such, then, is the office of a steward. He is a trustee, as distinguished from an owner. He acts authoritatively, yet only for another; in that property which he administers he has no interest beyond those obligations of duty and of honour which bid him do what he can for it, and his duties are terminable, and he has an account to render. And human life is a stewardship; we are all of us in different senses stewards, none of us is an owner in his own right, none of us is so insignificant that his work will not be noticed, none of us is so highly placed that there is not one higher than he who will review his work. But life in its many aspects is also an almost infinitely varied stewardship; we are stewards whether as men or as Christians, not less in the order of nature than in the order of grace.

I. The stewardship of which nine men out of ten think when they honestly admit to themselves that they are stewards at all is their real or personal estate—the total capital or income, be it great or small, which they happen to possess by a legal title. It may be the a fortune which touches upon millions, it may be the scanty and precarious earnings of a shop-boy or a needlewoman. In either case it is a property which is rightfully, and by the operation of divine Providence, placed at and secure to the disposal of one human being, and cannot be violently taken from him without violation. I do not say of the enactments of man, but of the moral law of God. Unless property is a real thing, recognised as such by the moral ruler of the world, the eighth commandment has no meaning. This broad truth is not to be set aside because particular properties or classes of property may have—morally, if you will, rather than legally—defective titles. If we say that every owner of property is in God's sight a steward of that property, we do not deny that his rights in it, as against those of any other man, are real and absolute rights. Only this absolute and real character thus attaching to property as a right maintained against the claim of other men does not affect its character when it is placed in the light of the rights of God. What are the causes to which it is due that you or I own property, whatever we happen to own? It has been left us by will, but what cause or causes brought about the legacy or made it possible that there should be any legacy at all? It was earned by a father, or a grandfather, and has come to us by natural inheritance. Here,

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

again, our parents are not the lowest terms in an ascending series, and their enterprise and energy was not originally their own. Or it has been accumulated by ourselves, it is the fruit of the toil of our hands, or of the toil of our brains—the best-known title to property. Be it so. But who gave us the hands or the brains with which to earn it? While these titles to property hold good, as against all human claims to take them violently from us, they point backwards and upwards to the original Owner of the one universal estate who has allowed us, has enabled us to settle upon it as His tenants; they point to the rights of that Supreme Proprietor whose stewards we are. And, therefore, depend upon it, sooner or later He will say: ‘Give an account of thy stewardship. What hast thou done with that with which I intrusted thee, but which, perhaps, thou hast thought of habitually as thine own?’ Let us try to answer that question here and now. Has it, however little, been spent conscientiously, or as the passion or freak of the moment might suggest? Has the larger part of it been lavished upon self, or a fixed proportion, at any rate, upon others? Has God, His Church, to support the extension of His kingdom, had any recognised share whatever in its disposal? Has it gone mainly or altogether in luxuries which pamper the body and at best do nothing for the mind or spirit? Has Dives with us fared sumptuously every day while Lazarus has lain at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that might have fallen from our table? Has little or nothing been done with it towards redressing those inequalities of condition which are mainly permitted that they may elicit generosity and self-sacrifice, which would be impossible if all had an equal lot? Suffer me to use plainness of speech in this matter.

You to whom God has given wealth would naturally, would rightly protect it against theories which are, no doubt, in the last resort, as subversive of all social well-being and order as they are certainly at issue with the moral teaching of the Bible. But if you would do this you must remember that the responsibilities of property are even more certain than its rights, that those who, legally speaking, do not share it with you, may have, morally speaking, in a proportion which your sense of justice should be eager to recognise, a valid claim on your consideration which your conscience may not refuse to entertain. You must remember that the old rule still holds, ‘If thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little,’ or else be sure there may be some rude summons even here to account for the stewardship which you have abused. Property only becomes insecure when a considerable proportion of it is held by people who think only of themselves. The best insurance against anti-social doctrines which treat property as robbery is such a wise

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

and generous use of it for the glory of God and the good of other men as Christian justice would always have prescribed.

II. Or the estate of which we are stewards is a more interesting and precious one than this. It is situated in the world of the mind, in the region where none but knowledge and speculation and imagination and taste have their place and sway. To this fair country men retire for whom mere accumulations of wealth have no charms whatever; here, at least, they claim to be owners, and to reign here as artists, historians, philosophers, poets, men of hard fact or men of cultivated fancy. They live as in an earthly paradise in which no supremacy is known save that of the faculties which have made it the beautiful and fascinating home it is. And yet in this world of art and literature, not less truly than amongst houses and lands and investments, man is a steward; it is not, whatever he may think, really his; it is not his in the last resort, whatever he may have had to do with creating it. All the industry which has amassed its varied treasures, all the keen intelligence which has sought out and analysed and arranged them, all the bright imagination which, with coloured infinite versatility and resource, has played on and around therein, even for centuries, all is from another. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights. Whether they have been made the most or the least of, whether they have been devoted to unworthy or to noble ends, whether they have been debased or abused in the using, He is the author of the gifts which have laid out the world of taste and thought and knowledge, and each contributor to that world, and each student, or even each loiterer in it, is only the steward, the trustee, of endowments, of faculties which, however intimately his own when we distinguish him from other men, are not his own when we look higher and place them in the light of the rights of God. 'Give an account of thy stewardship.' The real author and owner of the gifts of mind sometimes utters this summons to his stewards before the time of death. He withdraws the mental life of man and leaves him still with the animal life intact and vigorous. Go to a lunatic asylum, that most pitiable assortment of all the possibilities of human degradation, and mark there, at least among some of the sufferers, those who abuse the stewardship of intelligence. Be it far from us to attempt to unearth in any single instance, still more to proclaim aloud, what we may have suspected to be the possible secret of the just judgment of God. We are not always told by the prophet why some Nebuchadnezzar is driven from the haunts of men. But of those who fill our lunatic asylums some certainly are the victims of profligacy, but there are others who invite deep compassion, since they suffer from inherited disease; but others, too,

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

there are, who, in the days of mental strength and buoyancy, have forgotten the author of these powers, have exulted in their consciousness of intellectual might, have used it without regard to the honour of God or to the true well-being of man, and who have lived to show that the ruin of the very finest mind may be hideous and repulsive in the very ratio of its original strength and beauty, when the presiding gift of reason and order is withdrawn.

III. Or the estate of which we are stewards is something higher still. It is the creed which we believe, the hopes which we cherish, the religion in which we find our happiness and peace as Christians. With this treasure which He has withheld from others, God has intrusted us Christians, in whatever measure, for our own good and also for the good of our fellow-men. All other gifts are little enough in comparison with this, the knowledge of the author and the end of our existence, the infinite everlasting God, Father, Son, and Spirit ever blessed; the knowledge of the mediator Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, in union with whom we have real access to God, and through whose acts and sufferings on our behalf our acceptance with God is secure; the knowledge of what these great words—life, death, sin, repentance, time, eternity—really mean; the knowledge which may make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ‘This is, indeed, the gift of gifts, this is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.’ To this estate of revealed truth the ministers of Christ are in a special sense stewards. A bishop, in the Apostle’s word, is to be blameless as the steward of God, and men are to account the ministers of Christ as also stewards of the mysteries of God—that is, stewards of the sacraments—as well as of the once hidden but now partially revealed truths of the gospel. But also every believing Christian is a steward of the faith which he believes. He has to make the most of it, he has to explore it, to apply it, to make it, as the years go on, increasingly blessed to himself, and to impress it, as his opportunities shall suggest, on the thoughts and lives of others. It might seem to need no proof that of this treasure of revealed truth we are stewards and not owners, that it is not ours unconditionally and for ever, treat it as we may. Religion, too, is a loan, a trust; it is not an inalienable property. There was a well-known personage who used to speak of his religion as he might speak of his family, of his estate, of his seat in Parliament, of his coat of arms, as a feature of that whole which constituted his respectability. To be sure that you cannot do without religion is indeed the very common sense of life, but to treat the knowledge of the infinite and eternal as though it were a decoration of a social position would surely be impossible for any man who had ever got beyond the region of

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

phrase into real and spiritual contact with truth. More common it is to meet with men who treat their faith as though it were a mental toy, who are never tired of discussing its speculative and controversial bearing, but forget that it relates throughout to a living person, and that it is chiefly to be prized because it enables us to think about Him and to commune with Him as He is. They who make this mistake may be summoned before they think to part with the stewardship which they have thus abused. Loss of faith, which we hear of from time to time, is not always to be explained by the formidable character of any objections which are urged against revealed religion. It may well be the result of forgetfulness that faith is a stewardship, that the faith which is not a practical force in life is already in a fair way to be forfeited, and that the Christian believer, as such, no less than the possession of property, or the possessor of mind, has an account to give.

IV. And then, growing out of those three estates, is the estate of influence—that subtle, inevitable effect for good or for ill which man exerts upon the lives of those around him. That is a property which most assuredly is not to be purchased with money, it escapes those who would try to grasp it, it comes unbidden, undesired, perhaps unwelcome, to those who dread the responsibilities which it entails, but there it is—a possession of which, whether we will or no, we are, in our various degrees, stewards; and the question is, what use are we making of it; how is it telling upon friends, acquaintances, servants, correspondents, those who know us only from a distance, are we helping them upwards or downwards, to heaven or to hell? Surely a momentous question for all of us, since of this stewardship events may summon us before the end comes to give an account.

V. And a last estate of which we are but stewards is health and life. This bodily frame, so fearfully and wonderfully made, of such subtle and delicate texture that the wonder is that it should bear the wear and tear of time, and last as long as for many of us it does—of this we are not owners, we are only stewards. It is most assuredly no creation of our own this body, and He who gave it us will, in any case, one day withdraw His gift. And yet how many a man thinks in his secret heart that if he owns nothing else he does at least own, as its absolute master might own, the fabric of flesh and bones, nerves and veins, in which his animal life resides, that with this, at least, he may rightfully do what he will, even abuse and ruin and irretrievably degrade, and even kill; that here no question of another's right can possibly occur, that here he is master on his own ground, and not a steward. Oh, piteous forgetfulness in a man who believes that he has a Creator, and that that Creator has His rights! Oh, piteous ingratitude in a Christian who should remember that he

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

is not his own, but is bought with a price, and that, therefore, he should glorify God in his body no less than in his spirit, since both are God's! Oh, piteous illusion, the solemn moment for dissipating which is ever hurrying on apace. The author of health and life has His own time for bidding us give an account of this solemn stewardship, often, too, when it is least expected.

There are inscriptions which may be read upon tombstones in any large cemetery which tell a story which none can misread. In many a poor cottage, amid unnoticed tears, some true and noble life has bent low again and again before the awful summons. But there are sorrows, as there are sins, as there are virtues, which command the attention of the world. Certainly it is not always in judgment that the voice is uttered, 'Give an account of thy stewardship': the solemn summons which God addresses to different men from time to time on this side the grave point on to an account beyond, to a judgment that shall be universal, that shall be final. As S. Paul said eighteen centuries ago: 'God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.' Each summons to every soul to give an account of its stewardship suggests that solemn moment, 'When the Son of Man shall come in all His glory, and all the holy angels with Him; then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.' And the principle of this separation will be, at bottom, the use or abuse of the stewardship which each has received. 'Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered and ye gave Me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink, I was a stranger and ye took Me in, naked and ye clothed Me, I was sick and ye visited Me, I was in prison and ye came unto Me.' 'Then shall He say unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat, I was thirsty and ye gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and ye took Me not in, naked and ye clothed Me not, sick and in prison and ye visited Me not.' May we, by God's grace, lay to heart these solemn warnings of our most merciful Redeemer, remembering that though in this sphere of sin heaven and earth may pass away, His solemn words will not pass away!

H. P. LIDDON.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

God's Faithful Steward.

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? S. LUKE xvi. 12.

OUR Lord is drawing one last inference from the most difficult of all His parables, the parable of the unjust steward in the Gospel for the day. An unprincipled man, about to be turned out of his stewardship for dishonesty, looks this way and that for a last chance of securing himself against ruin. He calls his master's debtors one by one into the counting-house and lets them falsify their notes of hand by substituting a smaller acknowledgment of liability for a larger: the man who owed a hundred measures of oil is to write it fifty, and the man who owed a hundred measures of wheat is to turn it into fourscore. By this somewhat clumsy expedient he makes himself friends against the day of adversity; when he is turned out of his stewardship, he will have plenty of open doors; one last act of treachery will at least secure him a home, a choice of homes.

It has always puzzled the Christian reader to account for a parable the very moral of which looks at first sight so immoral; and the rendering of the Authorised Version, 'The lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely,' has added immensely to the difficulty. Careless readers not noticing the small letter which begins the word 'lord,' have taken 'the lord' for our Lord, and wondered—as well they might—how an act of flagrant dishonesty could have received in any sense the commendation of the Lord of truth and right.

The Revised Version has precluded this part of the difficulty by reading 'the' lord 'his' lord, and then the following words: 'And I say unto you,' read with their proper emphasis, mark the transition from the crooked estimate of the man's conduct by his worldly-minded master to the righteous moral drawn by Jesus Christ from conduct which in itself He could only condemn. 'I who condemn the fraudulent act of the steward, I who share not the admiration of the worldly-wise for his worldly wisdom, can yet bid you draw one lesson from it, can bid you mark the forethought with which the man of this world shapes and forms his plans, can bid you forecast your eternal future with a prudence like that which he showed in reference to a temporal; that so, when things temporal fail, as fail they must, eternal habitations may open to you, as good and faithful stewards who have earned, though it be all of grace,

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

the glad "Well done." The steward, in the parable, made himself friends by fraudulent tampering with the wealth of this world. The means which his fraud opened to him were earthly and temporal. I bid you so use your portion—less or greater—of worldly possessions, that when you go hence to be no more seen, those many mansions may be ready for you which I go hence to prepare.'

Three verses remain, the last of which is the text. Each one of the three verses presents a strong contrast. The first is a contrast of amount—the large is set against the little. The next is a contrast of kind—the unrighteous mammon and the true riches. The last is a contrast of tenure—that which is another's and that which is your own. In each of the three, certainly in the second and third, the things contrasted are the same—this world's wealth and that world's. The third of the three verses is our text and our subject this morning. 'If in that which was another's ye were not faithful'—it is a retrospect from the other side of death, when the earthly life lies all behind, shrunk to a single point and act—'if in that which was another's ye were not faithful, who shall give you—I appeal to yourselves, to your common sense, to your first principles of reason and equity—who shall give you that which shall be all your own?'

I. 'That which is another's' is not a part, it is the whole, of this life's possession; even while we have it it is another's—not alone that which is avowedly, whether legally or morally, a trust; not only a stewardship, like that in the parable, which commits to us the management of property, which while we administer it bears another's name, and is ours only by representation; not only the charge of minds to be educated for this life, or the charge of souls to be trained for another life, into which no idea of personal ownership could for a moment enter, on the very face of which is inscribed another's name, whether that other be man or God. Our Lord carries the thought far beyond this.

The lord in the parable, equally with the steward, holds all he has as another's rather than his own. He, too, is a steward, not an owner, in the estimate of truth and heaven. That which is so precarious in its tenure that we cannot reckon upon it for one day; that of which fraud or accident may deprive us in a moment while we live; that which certainly we neither brought with us into the world when we were born, nor can carry away with us when we die; that which, convenient as it is to us, important as it is to us, necessary as it is to us, yet does not enter into the life of life, does not make the happiness or the misery of the being; that which something else quite independent of it—an anxiety, a sorrow, a death, a sin—may turn into a bitterness or a curse in one hour,

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

without taking it away, without deducting one grain or one scruple from it; that which must certainly pass to another when we no longer live to keep it—is not all this a true description of the most secure of the possessions of this world? Our Lord, in His strong and yet most true language, calls it ‘another’s,’ not our own, even while we have it. It is not part of us; it is an adjunct; it is an accessory; it is an accident; it may go any day, it must go one day. No, it is not our own, it is another’s, even while we have it.

II. The same thoughts which justify the words ‘another’s, not ours,’ in their application to what we commonly call possessions, might be followed out with at least as much cogency with reference to other things, very unlike mammon in their nature. The pleasures of life are among these—the amusements, the ambitions, respect, rank, honour, fame—living or posthumous; alas! the affections, so far as they have the present life only for their sphere; yes, and even the intellect, even the mind, powerful to-day, weakened to-morrow, over-clouded the third day, gone finally and for ever, memory, recognition, everything, the fourth. Yes, if ‘another’s’ might be an unexpected name to give these immaterial possessions of this life, yet no one, I think, could repudiate for them the equivalent expression ‘not your own.’ You cannot secure, you cannot warrant, you cannot command any one of them; and certainly you cannot carry them with you when you die.

There is perhaps just one thing which you might expect our Lord Himself to exempt from the words ‘another’s, not your own,’ and yet which certainly He does not—that is, the soul. It is a very peculiar view, and yet certainly a Scriptural view, which regards the soul itself as having still to be either gained or lost by each one of us, the living. Two texts, both obscured in the Authorised Version, are explicit upon this point. One of these is in the twenty-first chapter of S. Luke: ‘In your patience ye shall gain your souls.’ The other is at the close of the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: ‘We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the gaining of the soul.’ The soul is the prize of the lifelong conflict; it is the stake of the great game in which the man and the man’s enemy are to play. It is this which makes life itself so serious, so momentous. ‘What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’—that is, to get it back if it is once forfeited. It is this which makes each particular act, each misspent day, each careless habit—yes, our Lord adds—each idle word, such a grave matter. It is a false move in the great game of which the soul is the stake, the risk, and the forfeit. The soul itself

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

is not your own yet; it depends on the life—the life earthward and heavenward, the life towards man, and the life towards God. If ye were not faithful in this world, in the charge of the soul which was still in the balance—still not assigned and not appropriated—who shall give you for your very own, your own for ever, the soul, for the forfeiture of which the possession of a world cannot compensate?

III. 'That which is your own.' The sound is pleasant to the ear. The lust of possessing is an instinct of nature. It breathes in the cry of childhood over the dolls and the playthings of the nursery, 'May I have it for my very own?' It waits not for the developed covetings of manhood, for the moneys which can be invested, or the lands that can be called after their owner. Possession is the charm. For it men will rise early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness from youth to hoar hairs and the grave. And it is one of the lessons of life, learned late and learned reluctantly, that to buy is not to possess, that the very words 'my own,' as applied to any earthly having, are a misnomer and a fallacy. Our Lord calls every earthly possession another's, even while we have it. Money makes itself wings; the four corners of the house are smitten in a moment by some wind from the wilderness; the child, dearer than life, learns to speak of another as its father; heart as well as flesh faileth, and finds that if earth is all, then love is a shadow that vanisheth. There is nothing for it but to write 'another's' betimes upon everything, to postpone to another state of being the very word implying ownership; and meanwhile to take our Lord's suggestion, and make fidelity to a trust the very idea of this life, the one condition of ever having anything of our own. 'Faithful in that which is another's' is the title of honour for any man below. And it is no fancy, no presumption, to mean by 'another' God Himself. Write 'Another' in capital letters, and, whether you are speaking of the wealth of this world, or of its home, or of its knowledge, or of its society, or of its affairs, or of its very life, regard yourself in awe as God's steward, and try to do in all, to be in all, what S. Peter calls a good steward of the manifold grace of God; so when all fails you, and the stewardship of the long past must be accounted for, you shall find yourself for the first time an owner, the soul, the self, redeemed and sanctified, being at last given you for your own.

If I do not misinterpret the listening hearts before me, there is something of discouragement, something of disappointment, in that which has been heard thus far. 'Is it indeed so?' we are asking ourselves, 'is it indeed so, that perfect fidelity to the trust, the all-embracing trust of this life, is the one condition of being admitted

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

hereafter into the pleasures which are at God's right hand?' 'If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who shall give you that which shall be your own?' The logic is perfect, the argument is unanswerable; but who and what am I who bow and stagger and fall on my face before it? Is this the gospel which Jesus Christ brought into the world to save sinners? It is the gospel, for which we never can be too thankful, of the new ideal of life as Jesus Christ taught, exemplified, and inspires it in His people. Life a trust, all that life has for us, another's, we ourselves stewards, not owners, required, aroused and enabled, to be faithful! Let us acknowledge the justice, let us feel the beauty, let us long for the inspiration of this grand conception, let us lay ourselves low before the revelation, far above, out of our reach, out of our sight, in its perfection, yet purifying and ennobling by the very humblest communication of itself to our effort and aspiration.

And then, let us remember that this gospel of the ideal life springs out of another gospel, nay, not another, for the gospel is one and indivisible, and what God hath joined let no man put asunder, the gospel of a sufficient atonement, a free forgiveness, and an absolute absolution. Only the man who has washed his robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb can so much as bear the blaze of that splendid ideal which is the will of God for him, even his entire consecration; and, as only the man who has been first forgiven can so much as start in the effort of living the ideal, so for his daily shortcomings and backslidings in it, for his shameful forgetfulness and miserable inconsistencies and frightful falls, there is forgiveness still, even to the seventy times seven and the thousand times ten thousand. Though he fall he shall not be cast away, for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand.

We have spoken of the lust of having as an instinct of humanity. Our Lord appeals to it in the text. We must wish to possess. If every other wish is mortified in us by painful experience, or disappointment, or by long habits of submission, at least one must survive, the wish to be saved at last, the wish to have something left when the great unclothing and stripping bare shall have come upon us in the passage and the gate of death. Only the fool and mammon can be indifferent to the question in the text, 'Who shall give us that which is our own?'

And yet there is one wish equally instinctive, at least, with some natures, and to which the gospel ministers with equal thoughtfulness. The desire of possession is strong in us; is there no such desire as that of being possessed? Scripture speaks of the purchased possession, meaning us, the human family, and each individual of it, as having been bought with a price, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, that

OUTLINES ON THE GOSPEL

we might be made Christ's own. Yes, God also desires a possession, not only that which He has and must have, this great universe of suns, and stars, and earths, and oceans, and principalities, and powers, excelling in strength, hearkening to His commands, and fulfilling the words of His voice. This possession needeth no purchase; it was His from the beginning, and world without end. But there was a speck and a spot upon the face of His creation. Sin had got into it, and death had crippled life by sin. This it was which God desired to make his own, first, by a stupendous sacrifice, and then by a spiritual inhabitation. We are that purchased possession, and to hearts that cannot readily rise to grand conceptions of worlds to be won, streets paved with gold, and gates of a single pearl, and all the magnificent ornaments of an Oriental Apocalypse, is there not something wonderful and winning in the thought of a Father in secret, who wished to have us for His own that He might be with us and in us here, and we with Him, and in Him there? Yes, if it is delightful to possess, delightful to possess as alone we can possess a friend or two, a heart or two, a dear home, a pleasant work, a spot of earth, and a glimpse of heaven, it is more to be Some one's, to have an Owner who values and cares for us, who has come with us into our exile, and into our wilderness, has brought us home, and will never leave us nor forsake us. I am Thine; Thou carest for me; I am Thine. Give then, or take away; all shall be well. I am Thine; then Thou, Lord, shalt be the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.

DEAN VAUGHAN.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

IV. OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

The Fall of Solomon.

Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. 1 KINGS xi. 11.



SOLOMON occupies a very prominent place in the services of this and last Sunday, but it is at least not a place of greater prominence than is due to his real position in the history of Israel. In Solomon, the as yet undivided monarchy reached its zenith of splendour. Solomon reaped the full harvest of glory for which David had toiled and suffered. In Solomon, too, the family of David entered on its decline, and thus Solomon presents himself to us in the Bible under a twofold aspect. He is an embodiment of glory and greatness, so conspicuous as to be a type of Christ, the King of Glory; and he is also a warning of the most serious—I might say, of the most tragical—description, pointing out the dangers which may surround all the best and greatest on this side of the grave. The lesson for this afternoon leads us to consider his fall, and it would be difficult to name an Old Testament subject which ought to be more interesting, more useful, more instructive.

Now Solomon's great sin was the encouragement and the establishment of idolatry in and about Jerusalem. The great providential purpose, the predestined business, of Israel, was the maintenance of faith in, and worship of, one true God. For this, Israel had been made what the Bible calls 'a peculiar people.' For this, Israel had received special ordinances, a special ritual, special and characteristic civil institutions. For this, as all the best spirits of the nation believed, Israel had been led out of the humiliation and bondage of its earliest history to its home on the Mediterranean shore, where it had already achieved, first, political and social security, and then empire. It was for this end that the great law-giver and the long succession of judges had laboured, each in his day, until the establishment of the monarchy. And David, notwithstanding the dark personal sins which disfigured his life, was felt to be the man after God's own heart, because, whether on his throne or in exile, whether suffering or triumphant, he never lost sight of the true work and destiny of his people, or of his own duties as its guide and ruler.

It was to this inheritance of faith and duty, consecrated by the

OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

struggles of so many generations—consecrated especially by his father's example and precept—that Solomon had succeeded. How often in every generation, on a smaller scale, are the substantial features of that touching scene reproduced, in which David, feeling the near approach of death, feeling the vast responsibilities of that life from which he is parting, bequeaths to the son of his choice a legacy of service which he himself could not hope, was not permitted, to discharge. David, as a man who had shed blood, might not build the house of God; but David could prepare for, he could design, he could make ready to hand, the task of Solomon. Nor was Solomon unequal to his inherited trust and its great responsibilities. The leading event of his reign was the building of the Temple on the site of Araunah's threshing-floor—a temple wherein the two great objects of national veneration, the ark from Zion, and the tabernacle from Gibeon, might, as in a common home, find their resting-place. It was a work of seven years and a half, and Solomon gave his best—his best of work and his best of wealth—to achieve its completion. Gold was brought in abundance from Ophir, cedar-wood from the Lebanon, copper it would seem from Cyprus, tin from Spain, if not from Britain, brass from the foundries of Succoth and of Zarthan. Skilled workmen came from Sidon. The existing civilisation of the eastern world was laid wherever it could be under contribution: and although the result was not colossal when we compare it with other temples, ancient and modern, its splendour, arising from the profuse use within and without of the precious metals, must have made it sparkle (to borrow an expression from Dean Milman) in the morning sun like the sanctuary of an El Dorado. Not that its interest was wholly, or chiefly, material. It was in Solomon's eyes, we may be sure, as in the eyes of the great prophet Nathan, under whose counsels he acted, the expression of a great idea—the visible symbol of a great truth. It proclaimed to Israel, in a shape which met the eye, the first, the second, the third, ay, and, at least by association, the fourth commandment. It was a creed in stone, but it reflected the living faith of a people. Great as was its material interest among the buildings of the temple—great as was its political value as consolidating the national life and supplying it with a consecrated point of unity, its chief significance was always and pre-eminently religious. It attested the devotion of the monarch to the glory of God—to the religious interests and destiny of the people over whom he ruled; and it was accepted, we are told, by a visible token of God's favour and presence. As, at the feast of dedication, the ark approached the Temple, the psalm arose, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the king of glory shall come in.'

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

And when, from within the portals of the Temple, the question was asked, 'Who is the king of glory?' it was replied from without, 'The Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle.' And when, in a second strophe, the injunction, the question, the reply, with certain significant variations, had been repeated, then the greatest moment in the life of Israel as a consecrated people had at last arrived: then the ark entered. It was placed in its splendid shrine, and the cloud, the glory of the Lord, the accustomed token of the sacred presence in that earlier revelation, filled the house. The house was God's. He had thus vouchsafed to own it.

Now, it is this, the great work of Solomon's life, which throws out his later apostasy into such painful relief, which makes his fall in his later age so strange, so paradoxical. Solomon, the builder of the Temple which David might not build, raised round about the sacred city shrines to the foul idols of the neighbouring idolaters—shrines to Ashtaroth, shrines to Moloch, shrines to Chemosh. Solomon, who had organised the priests and Levites, the services and sacrifices of the sacred ritual, was now encouraging, if he was not assisting at, rites which were cruel and impure as well as idolatrous. It is not merely the intrinsic magnitude of Solomon's offence—it is its inconsistency with the main work of his life, its inconsistency with what were, undoubtedly, for many a year, his strongest and most enthusiastic convictions—that mainly strikes us. If it were possible, with a German scholar, to think of the son of David as if he were a modern governor-general in India, tolerating old superstitions which he could not, if he would, suppress, the case might be different. In point of fact, Solomon introduces the new worship from without, and, let us observe, without any political pressure such as that to which weak religious men have in past days yielded. Many a man has abandoned truth or duty when it has threatened misfortune; and our Lord said, describing this class of characters, 'When persecution or tribulation ariseth because of the word, by-and-by they are offended.' But in Solomon we see a man to whom religious fidelity has brought—was still bringing—every earthly blessing, and who yet, in the fulness of his days and honours, fell away from its requirements. The spectacle is too strange, too suggestive, not to lead to an inquiry beyond.

I. What was it, we ask, that could have tempted Solomon to practise and support idolatry?

The temptation came to him, we are told, chiefly through his affections. He was not, anyhow at first, intellectually convinced that the idol-worship of the neighbouring nations was right. But then 'he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.' As yet the pure

OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

and stern marriage-law of Jesus Christ had not been given to the world, although, as our Lord pointed out, it could appeal to the primal facts of human history as warranting it. And Solomon's mother—she would not have been likely to teach her son any very high lessons of conjugal fidelity; and therefore Solomon's practice in a matter like this must not for one moment be judged by the standard of the gospel. But that which happened to him may happen with one wife as well as with seven hundred. The subtle but entire ascendancy which, in virtue of profound sympathies and laws of our nature, may be exerted by a woman over the strongest of men is a simple matter of fact. And it is, let me add, an influence which, in the majority of cases, is exerted with the happiest results; for, on the whole, women have higher aims, truer instincts, a purer and a loftier conception of life than men. And the current and most true proverb that a bad woman is much worse than a bad man owes its force to the fact that women, when they fall, fall deeper, as a rule, because, as a rule, they fall from a higher level than men. And therefore it is that women influence men as they do, sometimes undisguisedly, more often without its being at all suspected. And when this influence is misused the results are proportionately disastrous. Solomon's wives could do what probably no one man in his empire could possibly have done: they perverted the heart of the wisest of men.

II. And closely connected with this temptation was another. Solomon was the victim of a sort of false cosmopolitanism. His wide range of interests, his immense wealth, his contact with men of all creeds and of no creeds, brought to him too a temptation which often comes to those who, from the nature of their duties, see many sides of human life. In such cases the difficulty is to be fair, just, generous, to the convictions of others, without compromising what we ourselves know to be true, to recognise what is true in creeds which yet are largely false, without shutting our eyes to their substantial falsehood. Solomon's sympathy with all forms of human thought and life would probably have gone hand in hand with his anxiety to promote and to develop the commerce of his country. We can trace some steps, at any rate, in the process. His trade with Egypt, for horses and linen yarn, was closely connected with an event which must, at first, have startled religious Israelites who, ever since the exodus, had naturally regarded Egypt as the worst enemy of their faith. I refer to his marriage with the daughter of the Egyptian king. She came; she dwelt in a splendid palace outside the city of David; she was attended by women of her own race; but she probably conformed, at least in part, to the religion of her husband. But when the old barrier had been so far broken down, when the taste for novelty had been so far gratified, it was not easy to stop; and a few years later

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

the court of Jerusalem was filled with women of the Moabites, of the Ammonites, of the Edomites, of the Sidonians, of the Hittites; and they came not as the Egyptian princes before them had come, with the semblance or more than the semblance of a conversion: they came on their own terms; they brought their own priests, their own idols, their own rights. Solomon within the walls of his palace—Solomon amid the occupations and sanctities of his domestic life—breathed now a purely heathen atmosphere, and it did its work upon him. The old lines which fenced around the creed of Sinai in the mind of every believing Israelite grew faint and dim in the mind of Solomon. An easy indifference gradually supplanted the energetic faith which had reared the Temple. 'Might there not,' he would have said to himself—'might there not be something to be urged for the various forms of nature-worship with which my people are surrounded?' And thus Solomon was at last not merely content with tolerating the idolatry of his wives: he himself, we are told, 'went after Ashtarothe goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. He built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem.' Carelessness became indifference: indifference under pressure soon became apostasy.

III. And, thirdly, of course there must have been some subtle, some unconquered evil in Solomon's nature which led him to sympathise with the wrong thus recommended to him from without. No outward influence can really overmaster the rectitude of a regenerate will. If outward attractions or terrors prevail it is because of some weakness or rottenness within. As S. James says when he is resisting the plea that temptations can overmaster human weakness, when a man is tempted every one is led away of his own lusts and enticed. But the history of this increasing sympathy with what is wrong, of its gradual, its invisible development up to the point at which it triumphs in some outward act—this is a dread secret open only to the all-seeing eye in its completeness, although partly traceable by all of us if we even look within the chambers of our hearts.

Thus Solomon fell. And here let us note that his fall was not arrested by causes which might have seemed likely to prevent it. It was not, for instance, arrested by his advanced years. It is natural to think that as we get older we somehow necessarily get better. Many a man in middle life lays the flattering unction to his soul, or, at least, we say to ourselves that as we get older we do not get worse, that we move more or less necessarily along a fixed groove of thought and action and feeling, that we are confined and stiffened, if by nothing better, by our formed habits—stiffened, if against any considerable improvement, so, certainly, against any serious decline and fall. But these assumptions are not by any means borne out by

OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

experience. As the years pass and the end draws near, the course of the soul is not by any means always upwards and onwards. It is, I might almost say, as often downwards and backwards. Judas was an older man when he betrayed our Lord than when he became a disciple. Demas was older when, through love of this present world, he departed to Thessalonica than when he first joined S. Paul. Men think that as they get older they always become more far-sighted and more sensible, that they only get rid of the false enthusiasm, of the misleading hallucinations, which beset a young man, that they retain their old interest in goodness and in truth, only that it is tempered now by reflection and experience. It may be in many cases. In many cases it is not so. What really too often takes place is that conscience becomes less sensitive, the heart less tender, the sense of truth less quick and apprehensive. And this loss, this terrible loss of the early bloom of the soul, is not really compensated for by any ascertainable and counterbalancing advantage. No doubt age is meant, in the providence of God, to bring improvement, and Solomon himself has told us that 'a hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness;' but then everything depends on the appended condition. As age does not of itself ensure a man against spiritual or moral ruin, so it does not palliate—nay, it rather enhances and aggravates—such ruin when it has taken place.

Nor was Solomon's fall arrested by his knowledge, whether of things earthly or of things heavenly. He had, as we know, on a great occasion prayed for wisdom, and his prayer had been heard. He was the wisest man of his time; and, to this very hour, far beyond the pale of the Jewish and the Christian revelations, the tradition of the consummate accomplishments of Solomon is written broadly on the literature of the East. Its traditions express this by representing him as not merely the greatest of monarchs, but as the first of magicians. In point of fact, all the natural science to which man had attained in that age, all the constructive skill, all the rules and secrets of administration and government, all the knowledge of human nature that was then to be had, was Solomon's in the fullest sense. Nor was his knowledge only or mainly secular. He was a master, too, of moral and spiritual truth. He was, as we Christians believe, a pupil and organ of the Eternal Spirit, so that his writings still occupy a place, a very conspicuous place, in the Christian Bible. Solomon's proverbs—that wonderful repertory of the wisest thoughts about the eternal God, and about this finite human life—show abundantly how conscious he was of the very truths which might have kept him straight. He knew the claims of God; he knew the power of temptation; he knew the power of women; he knew the weakness of the human heart. He was no novice playing with forces.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

or trifling on the brink of some precipice, which he had not measured. but, then, to know is one thing: to be and to do is another. There were some thinkers among the old Greeks who supposed that knowledge and virtue were, at bottom, exactly the same thing, so that if a man was only well informed he could not help being a good man. And there are modern speakers and writers—many of them—on the subject of education, who appear to take the same rosy view of what can control and elevate our human nature, and to presume that if only people can be sufficiently provided with religious or useful knowledge the kingdom of heaven will at once begin upon earth. Every generation furnishes its share of mournful experience to contradict this misapprehension. Solomon was a conspicuous instance of a man who was not saved from doing the very gravest wrong by the immense extent of his mental and religious accomplishments. In point of fact, his knowledge made his fall all the deeper: it did not prevent it.

Nor was Solomon secured against failure by his previous sincerity. As it is true for all of us that while there is life there is hope, so it is not less true that while there is hope there is more or less danger. No man here can be made mechanically secure of heaven. There is no such thing on earth as indefectible grace. If S. Paul himself could be under an apprehension lest, after he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway, who shall presume that confident feeling, assurance, or anything else of the kind, shall give him an absolute certificate of eventual triumph? God, no doubt, on His side, is faithful, so far as He is concerned. None can pluck a soul out of His hand. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' Certainly we may say, with the Apostle, nothing external to us; neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor peril, nor the sword. But, then, that which nothing outward can do, we, each one of us for himself, most assuredly may do. The grey-haired saint may fall at last. The fortress which no enemy can scale may be betrayed by its defender. God does not oblige us to serve Him by giving us His grace. His gifts, in other words, do not reduce us to the level of machines: they simply enable us to make the best of that freedom which is our manhood's noblest attribute. There is no reason for questioning Solomon's sincerity in his early life because in his closing days he broke away from God into paths of his own devising.

The question has been asked—and much discussion has been expended in the attempt to answer it—whether, after all, Solomon was saved or lost. That is one of those tremendous questions which we have no means of really solving. Where the giants of the ancient church of Christ—where Augustine and Chrysostom—differed, we, of this day, may well be content to admit our ignorance. Nothing

OUTLINE ON THE LESSONS

is gained by straining our eyes during the night over the edge of a precipice. We cannot search out the secrets of the divine judgments, or of the predestination of souls. We may, indeed, reverently hope that one for whom God had done so much, and who had, in his day, done so much for the honour of God, would not be suffered after all to perish outright. But certain it is that Solomon's sin brought its penalty in this world. 'I will surely rend the kingdom from him.' We know how, at first partially, and afterwards wholly, the words were fulfilled. It is ever thus. Moral empire, at any rate—the influence of a father, of a teacher, of an elder brother, of a guide—is gone when sin, so to speak, has sprung a leak in the character, when all that had, at one time, cast a spell over others is seen to be undermined by some fatal inconsistency. This, at any rate, is certain, whatever may be hoped or feared as to all that lies beyond. And the practical lesson of such a fall as Solomon's is this, that perseverance in God's service is not a matter of course with any one of us, that it is a distinct gift or grace of God to be secured by watchfulness and prayer. We who are neither kings nor sages may well take warning by this history of the wisest of kings. Bad social influences, or a corrupt public opinion, or the weakness and treachery of our own hearts—any one of these, or all, may combine with the indefatigable enemy of our salvation. Nor is age, or experience, or cultivation and refinement, or even a high degree of religious knowledge, or the privilege of having done great works for God, or years of faithful service, any sufficient warrant that we can never fall. Let us watch the issues—we never can fully explore the depths—of these hearts of ours. Let us be sure that the best and most intelligent of men are, when left to themselves, incapable of thinking rightly, of judging rightly, of acting rightly, that they are capable of falling into the worst sins, of being irretrievably lost. And let us, therefore, look constantly, humbly, to God as the source of our strength. Let us grasp the Hands that were pierced in mercy for us on the Cross. Let us ask, with the Church in to-day's collect, for 'the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful, so that we who cannot do anything that is good without' God may, by God's Holy Spirit, be enabled to live according to His will here, and to die in His peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

H. P. LIDDON.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

V. OUTLINES FOR THE DAY ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

The Universality of Human Trial.

In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. HEBREWS iv. 15.



ES, even in that awful condition of man's nature which we call temptation, He, the Holiest, chose to have His part. It was not enough that He would be born as we are born, that He would live as we live, and speak our words, and think with our thoughts, and love with our affections, that He would suffer as we suffer, and die as we die. This was not enough. To be perfect man He need not sin, but He must be tempted, and He was 'tempted like as we are, yet without sin;' for the redeemer and the pattern of the human race must fulfil to the uttermost the law of its condition. He must in all things which were outside of that very inmost self, that personality which chooses and wills, and over which, in Him, no taint or infirmity of evil could pass, in all other things, He must bear the burdens and know the trials of being a man. He must be like unto His brethren if He was indeed to be their brother; and He would be like them that they might be sure of that which was absolutely essential for them to know, that they might be sure of the sympathy and answering mind of Him in whom they were to trust for everything in that interval of waiting during which they were not to see His face—that interval of waiting and preparation which we call our life. He drew near to them in everything that was morally possible. By the necessity of absolute goodness, of immaculate and perfect holiness, incapable—for if He were not the very nature of the Godhead would be annihilated—incapable of a shade of evil, He could not share their sin. But as He shared and bore the consequences, the punishment, of their sin, He would also share that which makes them to sin. To be able to succour them that are tempted, He Himself would suffer being tempted.

To this condition of our existence here—this law, as universal and as certain as death itself, that every living soul must pass through trial, must meet that which is involved in trial, temptation—the time and the season invite our thoughts. Lest we should faint and be discouraged, our Master and Lord went through temptation. That

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

we might be convinced that it is God's appointed path to perfection, He was proved and tried: that we might conquer in it, He endured and overcame. Let us fix our thoughts upon this universal law of our present state, and then let us consider how we ought to behave in regard of it.

I. The soul of man, in this passage through the years of time which is the preface, the antechamber, the school, the exercise-ground of an eternal existence, has to go through temptation. I am not going to ask why this law was imposed on human life. Till we know, not one little fragment, and that imperfectly, of the vast plan of God's government, but know the whole of it, none but those whose thoughts are too shallow to know their own ignorance will imagine it possible to give the answer. We may as well inquire why God made the worlds, and made them as He has made them, why He called this or that person, you and me, into being, why at this particular age of the world, and not at another, why under these present circumstances, and not in others. These things are beyond our reach. We have to do with what we know our life and condition to be; and from the very first dawn of human history, from the very first beginning of each individual life, man is ever on his trial, tempted to do wrong and resisting, tempted to do wrong and falling. Man comes into life fitted and equipped to meet his trial, to meet temptation, as he comes fitted and equipped to provide for his bodily wants, to subdue the earth, to live in society, to develop and improve the marvellous endowments of his nature. The soul comes with reason, with conscience, with knowledge, with will, with grace; and as the day goes on the question is ever presenting itself, how shall it use that great gift of will? What will it choose of the things before it? How will it decide between what it ought to do and what it would be pleasant to do? How will it decide between the present moment and the unseen, distant, inevitable future? And what is all human life but this, man having, in his freedom, to choose, to choose under all kinds of circumstances, all kinds of feelings, the stress and force of all kinds of motives, having to choose, and, choosing the right thing or the wrong, going straight onwards or turning aside, giving proof of what is in him—of the inmost bias and inclination of his character, of the use he would make of his freedom, of the strength and mastery over himself by which he can make his higher self govern his lower self, by which he can make his weaker and baser wishes yield to his nobler will? What is the whole moral side and interest of human history but this, how man bears temptation, how he comes out of his trial? Political history, social history, the advance of civilisation, in its higher or its lower phase, the progress of arts and knowledge, all

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

this is of great and undeniable interest ; but there is a record and story of deeper interest still—a story which is only to be completed beyond the years of time—the story which tells how men have played their part as moral beings, beings accountable to that high law of right and wrong which lifts them above everything else that they know of in this visible universe,—how under each new opportunity or emergency they have been faithful to truth, to duty, to goodness, to God, to grace, or have been blind to them and have betrayed them.

The beginning of the history of the first man, the prelude and figure of what was to follow, was the history of a trial, a temptation, a defeat. The first scene in the history of the second man was a temptation, a victory, the type and firstfruit of what man might hope for. The Bible opens with man ensnared and vanquished : it closes with the great sevenfold promise to him that overcometh, and with the vision of the glory of those who overcame. And what is all that is written between the first page of it and the last but the continued record of how, to men and to nations, there came the day of opportunity, the day of visitation, the day of proof, and how that day was met, and how they bore themselves in it, and what were its issues? What famous name in the Bible does not bring with it the associated thought of characteristic trial,—Abraham, Esau, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Job, Saul, David, Solomon, Jeroboam, Daniel, Peter, Judas, Paul? And for what does each nation come before us in its pages,—Egypt, Israel in the wilderness, Israel in Canaan, Israel in its kingdom, Israel in captivity, Israel restored? For what are those great names familiar to us of mighty cities in which were concentrated the power and renown of empires, or the fortunes of the world—Nineveh, Babylon, Jerusalem, Rome—but because in them we see, on the one hand, God's call, God's purpose, God's mission, God's gift to men ; on the other, the use which men have made of them,—the events, overwhelming in their scale, of nations having answered to their trial or failed in it,—their growth, their decay, their rejection, their downfall? And what is all secular history but the reflection and counterpart of that spectacle of trial which the Bible shows to us? You watch and follow, from age to age, great races, great commonwealths, great states, with their princes and their leaders ; you see their spring and mounting ; you see them on the edge and balance of their fate ; you see them in the sunshine and the storm ; you observe their tendencies, their inherited aims, blind as instinct, fixed as necessity, measureless in the energy of will evoked by them ; you see them at some supreme crisis making the world glorious by some heroic achievement, or darkening it with a new term of unheard-of vileness and disgrace. You see all this ; you

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

may study it as a set of phenomena ; you may analyse the current of forces, and the posture of circumstances, and the play of unknown and obscure influences ; but surely the deepest interest of all is a moral one,—how men chose what was terrible or formidable or seductive or disappointing,—how they chose between duty or pleasure or custom or interest,—between what was excellent and what was base—between justice and truth and the dazzling wrong which they had a pretext and the strength to do,—how the slow silent force of years revealed at last what men had become under their manifold but unnoticed discipline,—how they had been training themselves in faithfulness to their conscience, or had been insensibly sinking below themselves,—how, in a word, they had stood their trial of what they were—stood the trial of their choice, their principle, their conscience,—how they had behaved themselves in their temptation.

II. See man as he has been in history. See him next in those pictures of his character and actions, whether ancient or of yesterday, which, ideal as they are, have contributed so much to make us know ourselves—the drama, the novel. You see him when he is worth your interest, when he appeals to your fellow-feeling, a being under trial. The imagination of the ancient world, the ancient drama, represented this trial as an unequal hopeless struggle against the iron doom of fate ; but it beheld man still put to the proof by the cruelty of his lot,—still showing that he was, true, or weak, or brave, cleaving to nobleness or friendship or affection or law, or deserting them.

A higher, but not less awful, idea of trial came in with Christianity—the trial of choice and will, the trial of human responsibility and freedom in the decision between faith and sight, between sin and God, the trial whether the soul has honesty and strength to break through the meshes and entanglements of pretence and plausibility, or whether in its secret hollowness it lets itself be fascinated, spell-bound, blinded, by evil. This is the centre and living spring of all that is pathetic and all that is glorious and sublime in the great masterpieces of English tragedy. It is the human soul under its trial, so like our own—the human soul in the conflict and agony of temptation. It is this which affects us so profoundly in the captive king musing in irony over the vanity of a world which he has abused ; in the frenzy of the wronged and dispossessed father driven to madness by his children's ingratitude and his own folly ; in that piteous debate in which the alternative was a brother's death or a sister's shame ; in the jealousy of the husband yielding against his better self to the fiendish treason of the slanderer ; in the growth from small beginnings, under favouring accidents, of the monstrous sin, and the terrible balancings of the sinner's conscience between murder and a throne ; in the still more

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

terrible struggle of the sinner who would repent but cannot, but only binds himself—binds the webs of self-deceit faster about him.

‘O liméd soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engaged!’

These were the types and images of human trial in the larger and simpler forms of earlier times. Those of our own time have been more subtle and more refined, but as impressive, since the greatest of German poets embodied the characteristic trials of our age in his mighty tragedy, the tragedy of man—civilised, cultivated, educated man—in the presence of the twofold and combined temptation of knowledge and of passion, and his staking his soul as the price of his desire, And you cannot open a novel of the last thirty years, the worst and the most trifling, as well as the profoundest in their insight, and the richest and most delicate in their observation, without meeting in one form or another, high or debased, the pervading interest of human trial. They may exhibit it in false, or poor, or fantastic shapes, or they may unfold its multiplied and changing complication with that perception of the fine lines and shades of character, that quickened discrimination of its infinite living types, that deeper penetration into those dim recesses where its motives and its self-delusions are born, which are as much the gifts of our time as the deeper knowledge of nature—gifts won for us by the genius of great masters and searchers of the human heart. But whether they do it well or ill—whether they teach us or mislead and corrupt us—they equally attest the universal presence of real trial in man’s life: they draw that life as one which would be without meaning, if it were not for ever meeting that which proved and tested it.

That is what man’s life looks like when watched from without and at a distance; but we have to do with it much more closely than as spectators and critics, much more closely than as the audience who look on at the play, and pass their judgment, or bestow their momentary sympathy on the actor. In this great scene, how great, how eventful, we see clearly enough outside us, in this great scene, we are the actors, too. We watch the game, and we forget that we see in it the image and reflection of what we ourselves are doing; but we are ourselves part of that world in which human souls are on their trial, in which each man, in all the infinite varieties of state and circumstance, has his task and mission assigned him by his Maker and most holy Judge, to call to do or to suffer, with all that is necessary, in providence and grace, if he will, if he chooses, to do and to suffer according to what God appoints him. Each man, day by day, as the thread of his life runs on, shows in one way or another what he is in his very self. He is made to disclose himself, the

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

realities of his character, the powers which bear supreme sway in his heart, and shape his choice. And choose he must, moment by moment. He knows what he ought to do ; he feels what he would like to do ; and with his awful dower of freedom he can take, he is taking, which he will. We cannot live, we cannot think or wish, without this searching of intentions, this trial and revealing of hearts, going on as, one by one, the pages of our life are turned. It is the law and condition of our nature which we can no more withdraw ourselves from, or divest ourselves of this great prerogative of freedom, than we can escape from the atmosphere which we breathe around us, or from our shadow in the sunshine.

What we see in the great lives in the Bible finds place in the most commonplace of our modern lives. He was 'in all points tempted like as we are.' We may turn the words round, and say with reverence that, like as He was tempted, so are we, even the humblest among us, tempted, tried, according to the measure of what we can bear, but as truly, and with all depending upon the issue. And this we have to learn, to take in the truth of it, and the bearing of it on our thoughts about ourselves. Some forms of trial round us we have no difficulty in understanding ; but that we ourselves are being tried, really put to the proof, really made to show what is in us, and say what we are in very earnest, just as we see and read of others being tried, that we are really tried, and sometimes to our deep shame and bitter loss, this we do not find commonly so easy to understand. We look on safe, as we think ourselves, with horror, with amazement, perhaps with sympathy, on the great and strange temptations going on all round us ; and well, indeed, we may. Beings, born in sin, nursed in sin, from the very first dawn of reason familiar, more familiar than with our daily bread, familiar with evil which to us is a pollution to think of, cut off from all good, not even allowed what we call a chance in life, have yet been sent forth on their voyage in life by the Almighty and the All-merciful. He has His purpose in them, which they might answer to. They are on their trial. But what a fate that were if it had been ours ! Again : That strange combination of sickness and mischance invading a whole family, striking down one, crippling another, sweeping off one after another the strongest and the most healthful, barring one after another the openings of earthly hope, clouding all things with death and pain, perhaps with shame, there is trial indeed ! It is sorrow and anguish even to think of it. And at the other extreme we can see the trial of the too fortunate. What a temptation it must be to have grown up with all things at our command, with nothing to remind us of difficulty or duty or want of self-denial, taught to think that our will must be right, trifling away our time and indulging our caprice without in-

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

convenience or warning, knowing contradiction only to override it ! There are those who have to go through such a life on their path to the grave and the eternal world. It is not hard to see how they are tried.

But are we, too, really, seriously, on our trial, on our trial with tremendous issues depending on it, on our trial as truly as people we read of or, perhaps, actually see visibly going through the crises which tests and proves what they are ? Does temptation in this solemn eventful shape really come near us too ? In that quiet prosaic round of business and domestic life, in this silent unperceived growth in our characters of habits and motives and tastes and judgments, it is really so that that mighty heroic work is going on of the choice between good and evil, duty and desire, the things of time and the things eternal, the grace of God and the passions of the flesh, resistance to temptation or compliance with it, which makes the glorious history of the saint, or the unutterable pathetic tragedy of the castaway.

Amid the hopeless wrecks of human history, the fatal disasters of individual lives, there is planted the Cross of redemption, of recovery, where our shame and our hope are joined, where the Crucified stretches forth His arms to embrace and console the tempted, the defeated, in this mortal struggle for life or death. You are weak, you are blind ; you know not where you are and where you are going ; you feel within you the treacheries of sin ; you know not how your will has played you false, how your motives have deceived you. Yes, it is true. Yes, but around you and within you has come from on high, to make His abode with spirits on their trial, the Eternal Spirit, the holy Comforter of Pentecost, the Enlightener, the Strengtheners. He knows what you are ; he interprets your real self ; he responds to what is in your heart : He makes intercession for you with groans that cannot be uttered ; He helps your infirmities. Commit yourself, commit your trial, in all true honesty of heart, to Him, to that Holy Spirit of truth who whispers in your soul and conscience. Commit your trial to Him, and one thing you may be sure, that from falsehood and insincerity of choice, from unavowed motives and disguised self-seeking, He will protect you. And that is what we have to fear.

DEAN CHURCH.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

The Holy Communion.

The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread I CORINTHIANS x. 16, 17.

I. **I**T is not only as a remembrance of Christ's death, but as an actual means of applying that death to our own personal benefit, that the Lord's Supper is to be thankfully received. In partaking of the Bread and Wine, we are spiritually partakers of the Body and Blood of Christ. Our souls are strengthened and refreshed by the heavenly nutriment, represented by the outward signs. Listen to the words of our Saviour Himself, speaking apparently with some reference to the future ordinance: 'This is the bread, which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die; I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' Here spiritual nutriment and eternal life are promised, to the participation in 'the bread, which came down from heaven,' an expression in its primary sense, meaning probably the benefits of Christ's Passion, but surely not without some allusion to the means of applying those benefits, provided in the Holy Communion. Again, in the very words, 'This is My Body,' and 'This is My Blood,' some partaking of the Body and the Blood is implied, and, as it could not be the partaking in the actual Body of our Saviour, which then held the bread, and which is now in heaven, it must mean the spiritual partaking in the benefits annexed to His crucified Body, and to His precious Blood. To the same purport also speak the words of the text: 'The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread, which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ?' Now a communion of the real actual Body and Blood of Christ is contradictory to our senses; and therefore, we infer a real Communion of Christ's Body and Blood after a spiritual manner, 'an inward and spiritual grace,' conveyed under 'an outward and visible sign.'

II. Man has ever an excuse for sin; and accordingly there are too many pretexts urged by those who neglect this ordinance. The full examination of these excuses cannot be comprehended within the limits of one discourse, and we can therefore only cursorily mention some of the principal, leaving it to your own conscience to apply what is suitable to yourselves, but entreating you to remember that,

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

you will have to answer for your conduct, not to man, but to God, who knoweth the very secrets of the heart, and you will then have it discovered, whether the omission proceeds from indifference, from a wicked and godless life, or from conscientious scruples, such as can stand the test, which will be applied to them in that day.

‘Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.’ ‘Judge therefore yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord.’ Spend as much of the time before the celebration as is really in your power, in reflecting upon your past lives, in searching out your spirits, in detecting every secret sin, in repentance and resolutions of amendment, in charity, and above all, in prayer.

R. E. JELF.

Money for Men.

I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. ISAIAH xiii. 12.

THAT is written in the pages of Isaiah’s book, but Isaiah never said it. The scholars who translated that chapter in the year 1611 thought that that was what Isaiah said. But the scholars who translated it over again in the year 1884 say that what Isaiah really wrote was this: ‘I will make man more rare than fine gold.’

The preacher was promising a day of trouble for great Babylon. ‘Behold,’ he cried, ‘the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate.’ And then he came to the very abyss and extremity of their desolation. Bad enough to have the land shorn of its harvests, and all the standing grain trampled under the feet of war-horses; bad enough to have the consuming fire lay hold upon its houses; bad enough to have pride turned into shame, and wealth into poverty, and power into captivity. All that was bad enough. But thus far hope was left, for men were left. Leave us men and we may live. Leave us men and you may do your worst: the day will pass, and to-morrow we will repair the damage, and begin over again, and get our revenge upon you yet. But there shall be no men. The widows and the fatherless children shall search about the ruined streets, and a man shall be as rare a sight as a purse of gold. ‘I will make a man more precious than fine gold, even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.’ That was what Isaiah said.

I. ‘I will make a man more precious than fine gold.’ I will so bring it about that a man shall be of more value than a bar of gold. I will make men love their brother-men more than they love their money. Isaiah never said that; but God said it, and says it still.

OUTLINES ON VARIOUS PASSAGES

This is a sentence out of the Word of God. Isaiah said a great many things in his day, and is dead. But God is not dead. And God says this to-day. In the Bible or out of the Bible, this is the voice of God. This word is true with all the truth of God Almighty.

On one side a man, on the other side a bar of gold. On one side a man, on the other side a herd of swine. That, you remember, was at Gadara, beyond the Lake of Galilee. Christ had healed a poor man there who had a whole legion of devils in possession of him, and somehow that healing had involved the loss of a large herd of swine. Down they had rushed over a steep place into the sea, and that was the end of the swine, but it was the beginning of the man. And then the owners came. And when they came they altogether overlooked the man. They paid no heed to this their brother clothed and in his proper mind, made all over new. Their eyes were a-search for swine. They had lost two thousand head of swine! And they requested Jesus to depart out of their coasts as speedily as possible.

I will make a man more precious than a herd of swine, or than a purse of gold, or than the golden wedge of Ophir. There is no question as to Christ's comparative valuation of a man and money. Men were not for money, in His estimation, but money for men.

The text sets the emphasis, not on money, but on men. And that is Christianity. That is what the Master taught.

II. What we all need, whether we have great possessions or small possessions, is to be interested in men. The part of a Christian man or a Christian woman is to set about making somebody's life better. I believe that preaching does some good. Somebody has compared it to dashing a lot of water over a collection of narrow-necked vessels: a drop or two gets in. But I know that the most good is done when the preacher goes down out of the pulpit, and talks quietly and privately and personally to one man or one woman. I believe, too, that some good is done by the general distribution of charity, by putting money into church alms basins, and writing figures in subscription lists. But I know that the best good is got at when one helps one; when a man goes to his neighbour and gets acquainted with him, and becomes his personal friend, and sympathises with him, and uplifts him. You won't have to go very far to find somebody who is worse off than you are. Take that somebody up. Interest yourself in that unhappy life. Perhaps it will take money; perhaps it will take time; perhaps it will take yourself. Give yourself, anyhow, and as much else as you need to. But, above all, be generously interested. What men and women want is honest interest, real, human, brotherly and sisterly in-

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

terest. They look into your eyes as you take their hand, and they read there whether to you a man is more precious than fine gold or not.

One of the most helpful people I know in Pittsburg lives in a back street, in an unpleasant neighbourhood, in a small house. Everybody in that neighbourhood knows her, and she knows them and their children. They go to her with their troubles and she gives them her sympathy. As for money, she would give that too if she had any to give. She gives herself. The whole street is better because she lives in it. But if she had the means which some have, what would she do, I wonder? Would she fall before the temptation of a comfortable life? Would she get, perhaps, to thinking that because she had plenty of butter on her bread so had everybody else? and because she was contented, all the mutterings of the discontented people were but needless grumblings? Anyhow, it is true that the kindest, most thoughtful, most helpful people, quickest to bear the hardest inconveniences for a neighbour, readiest to lift up those that are down, are the poor.

It is not your money that we want so much as your interest. We want your own personal, hand-to-hand and heart-to-heart endeavour. Do you not remember in the old story how Elisha sent his servant with his staff to bring back life to the dead, and the servant and the staff were no good at all? the dead stayed dead. And then he came himself, and the still heart began to beat. We want you to come yourself. Don't send your servant! Don't send anything. Come yourself!

'Who gave Himself.' That is the secret of the power of Jesus Christ over the hearts of men to-day. He went about taking men by the hand and lifting them up. Jesus Christ was more interested in men than He was in anything else on earth or in heaven. He cared not for reputation, cared not for the comforts of a sheltered life, cared not for money, cared not for Himself, but He did care for men. And He loved us and gave Himself for us.

GEORGE HODGE.

VI. ILLUSTRATIONS

*The smiling
of the Rock.*

1 COR. X. 4.

THE water flowing from the rock was like a river of life to the children of Israel. Who can describe the distress throughout the camp, and the appearance of the people when they were asked to approach a flinty rock instead of a fountain or a stream, to quench their thirst. What angry countenances were

ILLUSTRATIONS

there, what bitter censures and ungrateful murmurings, as Moses went up to the rock with nothing in his hand but a rod. 'Where ever is he going,' said they, 'with that dry stick? Does he mean to make fools of us all? Is it not enough that he has brought us into this wilderness to die of thirst? Will he mock us by pretending to open fountains in the solid granite? But see! he lifts the rod; he smites the rock, and lo! it bursts into a fountain, and twelve crystal streams roll down before the people! Who can conceive the sudden transport! Hear the sound of joy ring through the camp, and echoing from the crags and cliffs of Horeb! 'Water! water! A miracle! a miracle! Glory to the God of Israel! Glory to His servant Moses!' It was a resurrection day to Israel, a morning light dawning upon the shadow of death! New life and joy are seen throughout the camp. The maidens run with cups and pitchers to the rock. They fill and drink, then fill again, and haste away to their tents, with water for the sick, the aged, and the little ones, joyfully exclaiming; 'Drink, father; drink, mother; drink, children; drink, all of you! drink abundantly! Plenty of water now! Rivers flowing from the rock!' The oxen come, the asses, the camels, the sheep, and the goats; the feathered tribes come, the turtle-dove, the pigeon, the swallow, the sparrow, the robin, and the wren; while the croaking raven and the fierce-eyed eagle, scenting the water from afar, mingled with them around the rock.

Temptation. 'OPEN thou mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see the
1 COR. x. wondrous things of Thy law.' This prayer is as necessary for us as it ever was to David. Let us then beseech God to purify our moral vision, to give us tender and delicate consciences, and a fear of dallying with anything that has the least semblance of evil. Let us endeavour day by day to discover shortcomings, to ask pardon for them through Christ, and to amend them by the aid of the Holy Spirit. This if we do, we shall at the last be able to realise those hopeful though humble words of the saintly Richard Hooker, which comforted the dying bed of one whose loss the Church some years back had occasion to mourn, I mean Archbishop Longley: 'Though I have by His grace loved Him in my youth, and feared Him in mine age, and laboured to bear a conscience void of offence to Him and to all men; yet, if Thou, O Lord, be extreme to mark what I have done amiss, who can abide it? And, therefore, where I have failed, Lord, show mercy to me; for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my own unrighteousness, for His merits who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners. Amen.'

Printed by T. and A. CONSTABLE, Printers to His Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press





Date Due

[illegible]

BV
4223
C52
1900z
v.10

The church year pulpit
library

15875

15875

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION LIBRARY

BERKELEY, CA 94709

